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Humanitarian Action and Interaction

A Study of the IDP-Oriented Humanitarian Network in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq

by

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ABSTRACT

The following master's thesis is the culmination of roughly four months of work focusing on the humanitarian assistance community operating in the Sulaymaniyah governorate of the Kurdish Region of Iraq. Specifically, it focuses on the dynamics between international and local non-governmental organizations and how these dynamics and interactions affect their goal of assisting internally displaced people achieve 'durable solutions'. The temporal focus of the thesis is on network interactions taking place between December 2013 and 2019 when the emergent Islamic State of the Levant (ISIL) forced millions of Iraqis out of western Iraq and claimed the major city of Mosul as its capital. The majority of those displaced relocated to the Kurdish Region of Iraq and the state capital, Baghdad. This massive displacement, following and compounding decades of intentional displacement by Sadam Hussein's regime, has been a great challenge for the federal Iraqi government and regional Kurdish government to address, even with the assistance of United Nations agencies and major international humanitarian agencies.

The thesis adds to the growing body of work focused on the issues of IDPs and 'durable solutions' (the term used to identify when an IDP need no longer be classified as one). It is also written during a time of heightened academic interest, and internal debate within the humanitarian community, over how international organizations interact with local organizations when addressing humanitarian issues. To understand this dynamic, systemic network theory and a critical discourse analysis are employed conjointly.

The data analyzed is a combination of collections from desk research (i.e. various reports and organization website publications) and two interviews with organizations operating within Sulaymaniyah, one international and one local. The organizations interviewed are the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Civil Development Organization (CDO). Both organizations have been involved with assisting IDPs in Iraq since the early 2000's and have worked directly with IDPs in the governorate. Network theory is employed to clarify the existence of a network and understand how the involved actors interact. A critical discourse analysis is performed to understand the power

dynamics inherent within the network and how those dynamics also affect the network's outcome.

Ultimately, the thesis identifies that there is indeed a network operating within the governorate and that the structure and power dynamics of the network do affect its outcomes. Two forms of discourses, that of the network positive and the network critical, are identified with the latter primarily reflecting the voice of local organizations and their desire for more input into how programs targeting IDPs are developed and implemented. The thesis closes with a reflection on how the chosen theory and mode of analysis were applied in addition to steps that could be taken to expand this research further.

ACRONYMS

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDO	Civil Development Organization
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
GoI	Government of Iraq
HAC	The Humanitarian Assistance Community
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IOM	The International Organization for Migration
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
MoMD	The Ministry of Migration and Displacement
NCCI	NGOs Coordination Committee for Iraq
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NT	Network theory
PoC	Persons of concern
RWG	The Returns Working Group
UN	The United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNFPA	The United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNPP	The United Nations Partner Portal
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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1. INTRODUCTION

Courses within Aalborg University's Global Refugee Studies program have called attention to the lack of international protection for internally displaced people and highlighted the top down approach of many international organizations (i.e. that they import humanitarian solutions rather than develop solutions in conjunction with local knowledge). The researcher's academic studies, professional experience, and understanding of contemporary trends within the humanitarian field have provided additional evidence of these dynamics. In the course of university research and professional project development, both authors have repeatedly heard local CSOs and community actors bemoan the restrictive and cumbersome grant processes that fund their programs and limit their agency. Additionally, blog posts, podcasts, and shared life experiences are increasingly calling attention to the unequal dynamics inherent in the current humanitarian field whereby expatriate staff are paid inordinate sums to manage programs despite their lack of contextual knowledge, local staff find it difficult to enter in to positions of management, and donors focus on developing programs that do not necessarily match the needs of beneficiaries.

1.1 A Long History of Displacement

Over the past several decades, and in three waves, millions of Iraqis have been displaced from their homes and forced to find shelter elsewhere in their country and, sometimes, without.[1] During the most recent wave of displacement, which began at the end of 2013, there were roughly three million Iraqis who could be classified as internally displaced people

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[1] As acknowledged by scholars and the Norwegian Refugee Council, it can be extremely difficult to tabulate an exact number of displaced people. Counts can be affected by a number of factors that include, but are not limited to, government interests, respondent willingness to identify as an IDP, and survey methodology. Indeed, many counts are often estimates and what appears to be an exact number may be merely a well placed guess. As such, every IDP count included within this paper should be understood to be a product of the publishing organization rather than a reflection of the actual number of people undergoing displacement at the time referenced. Authors have referenced each number to the publishing organization so that the reader may understand more clearly where the numbers come from and the interests behind the number produced.
Norwegian Refugee Council. "Guidance on Profiling Internally Displaced Persons." (2007 November) from https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/47b5ad3a2.pdf and Schon, Justin. "Let's be transparent about refugee and IDP statistics." (2018, December 18) OECD Development Matters from https://oecd-development-matters.org/2018/12/19/lets-be-transparent-about-refugee-and-idp-statistics/

(IDPs) in 2016, comprising roughly eight percent of the total Iraqi population.[2] Three years later, that number had reduced by just over fifty percent.[3]

To understand the cyclical spirals of displacement within Iraq it is helpful to jump back half a century and understand three major periods of displacement. In the 1970s and 1980s, over one million Iraqi Kurds and Shia were displaced as part of political campaigns against them orchestrated by then President Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath regime. Saddam and his regime used forced displacement as a tool to systematically marginalize non-Arab minorities and strengthen its political control over the country by moving Iraqi Arabs into the land formerly owned by those who had been displaced.[4] Human Rights Watch (HRW) detailed this massive forced displacement campaign against the Kurds in Northern Iraq which took place following the GoI's declaration in 1974 creating a nominally autonomous region for Kurds in the north-east of Iraq in what is today known as the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.[5] Just over a decade later the same regime conducted a genocidal operation, known as the Anfal Campaign, which killed over 50,000 Kurds.[6]

Another massive wave of displacement, this time pushing people out of Iraq's borders, was also expected (but did not come to fruition) in 2003 when the "Western powers prepared for 1 million Iraqi 'refugees' to flee their country".[7] Instead, massive internal displacement took place three years later in 2006 during a period of heightened sectarian-based instability within the country. This period of displacement was capped by the repeated bombings of Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra which prompted hundreds of thousands of Iraqis to make the decision to flee. By 2008 there were more than 2.5 million (IDPs) with roughly the same number having left the country.[8]

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[2] IOM. Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq - Part One, April 2017. (2017, April 30). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from
https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/access-durable-solutions-among-idps-iraq-part-one-april-2017
[3] DTM Iraq. (2020, May 1). Retrieved May 1, 2020, from https://displacement.iom.int/iraq
[4] IOM. Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq - Part One, April 2017. (2017, April 30). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from
https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/access-durable-solutions-among-idps-iraq-part-one-april-2017
[5] Human Rights Watch. "Claims in Conflict: Reversing Ethnic Cleansing in Northern Iraq." *Human Rights Watch*, 29 Apr. 2015, https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/iraq0804/4.htm#_ftnref2
[6] Wong, Arthur. "Saddam Charged with Genocide of Kurds." *The New York Times*, April 5, 2006. https://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/05/world/05iht-saddam.html.
[7] Chatty, Dawn and Mansour, Nisrine,"Unlocking Protracted Displacement: An Iraq Case Study" Refugee Survey Quarterly 30 , (2011) p. 52; Chatelard, Geraldine, "Iraqi refugee and IDPs: From humanitarian intervention to durable solutions." Middle East Institute and Fondation Pour La Recherche Strategique (June 9, 2011).
[8] *Ibid.*

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Just over a decade later, the growing power, control and violence by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) led to the third wave of displacement with millions of Iraqis undergoing immediate displacement due to ISIL taking control of roughly thirty percent of the country.[9] According to the International Organisation for Migrations' (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), 3.2 million Iraqis became newly displaced IDPs, between December 2013 and October 2015.[10] Nearly half of these IDPs traveled into the Kurdish region of Iraq, increasing the region's population by more than a quarter in 2014 alone.[11] Operations by the Iraqi army, in conjunction with Kurdish forces and the international community, began the process of retaking areas captured by ISIL in 2015 and culminated in the battle for Mosul which began in late 2016 and ended in early 2017.[12]

By January 2019, 1.8 million IDPs remained displaced with 4.1 million having returned to their place of origin.[13] A multiplicity of organizations have been performing humanitarian work to support the Iraqi IDPs, returnees and host communities deal with this process of displacement and return (e.g. Government of Iraq, UN, local NGOs) by developing and implementing humanitarian and stabilization programs.[14]

This paper is also authored during a period where the global humanitarian sector is focused on achieving organizational equity in the field between international and local actors. As noted in a 2015 report by Oxfam International, there is increasing scrutiny of the way international organizations interact with local organizations vis-a-vis the value of knowledge and allocation and utilization of funds.[15] Therefore, and in light of the massive participation of international and local actors in assisting the displaced in Iraq, this paper aims to explore and investigate how international aid agencies and local NGOs work together to assist IDPs

[9] Higel, Lahib. *Iraq's Displacement Crisis: Security and Protection*. Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, 2016.
[10] "IOM-Iraq Mission DTM." Iraq Mission - Displacement Tracking Matrix. IOM, October 2015. http://iraqdtm.iom.int/archive/Home.aspx.
[11] Karasapan, O., and S. Kulaksiz. "Iraq's internally displaced populations and external refugees– a soft landing is a requisite for us all." *Brookings Institute* (2015).
[12] BBC. "How the Battle for Mosul Unfolded." *BBC*. July 10, 2017. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37702442.
[13] IOM. Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Three Years in Displacement. (2019, February 12). Retrieved May 1, 2020, from https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/access-durable-solutions-among-idps-iraq-three-years-displacement p. 7
[14]Ibid.
[15] OXFAM. Oxfam Annual Report 2015 - 2016. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/story/oxfam_annual_report_2015_-_2016_english_final_0.pdf

in their search for a return to relative normalcy and security which is sectorally referred to as a 'durable solution'.

With this background in mind, the following overarching research question and supporting sub-questions have been developed.

Research Question:
How has the humanitarian network within Sulaymaniyah, Iraq affected programs targeted at achieving durable solutions for IDPs within the governorate?

Sub-questions:
1. How is the humanitarian network within Sulaymaniyah constructed?
2. How do the organizations involved in the network frame and pursue their work in the context of this network?
3. Why and how do the outputs of the respective organizations differ as a result of their involvement within this network?

To answer the overarching research question in an effective and efficient manner the researchers have identified three sub-questions which, when approached, will provide an answer to the overall research question. The answer to sub-question one will elucidate the construction of the humanitarian network targeting IDPs in Sulaymaniyah so that the existence of a network can be confirmed and its construction understood.

Once the network has been established and defined, the authors will elaborate on how the organizations within this network frame and pursue their work related to IDPs. This question is answered through an application of Systemic Network Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis on interviews with two network actors and desk research about the network.

The final sub-question circles back to the impact of the network on the organizations' outputs and completes the inquiry prompted by the overarching research question. By establishing that there is a network, identifying how the involved organizations pursue their work within the context of this network, and clarifying the how outcomes are affected by the

organization's involvement in the network, the results of the network on the organization's IDP work will be clearly understood.

2. BACKGROUND

Prior to investigating the results of foreign intervention on behalf of IDPs in Iraq it is crucial that the reader have an overview of their complex history within the country and on the global stage. The reasons for displacement, the actors involved in addressing displacement, and the local dynamics of Sulaymaniyah all have their part in shaping the outputs focusing on assisting IDPs who have moved to the governorate. Humanitarian efforts are often intimately local while simultaneously being transnational and as such it is important to understand the international regime that surrounds the issue of IDPs as it differs from that of refugees. Following this, the factors causing the most recent wave of displacement are described and the flow of IDPs detailed. A demographic sketch of Sulaymaniyah is also provided so that issues brought up from the accumulated data are clear. This section concludes with a brief overview of the three groups of humanitarian network actors operating and exerting influence within the governorate: government actors, international actors, and local actors.

2.1 IDPs on the International Stage

Individuals who have been displaced within their country often do not receive the same protections as those who have crossed international borders. Indeed, according to Roberta Cohen, one of the foundational researchers in the field of internal displacement, "internally displaced persons [. . .] did not come into the international agenda until the last decade of the 20th century."[16]

In attempting to understand the issues faced by IDPs and the developing international protections for them Ms. Cohen and Mr. Deng discovered that, despite a lack of an internationally agreed upon pact, there were already substantial protections for IDPs within international human rights frameworks. Furthermore, the significant issues related to state sovereignty that arise when attempting to formulate concrete protections that permit and/or require international involvement on behalf of IDPs make it highly unlikely that a regime similar to that of the current international refugee regime could ever be developed or enforced.[17]

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[16] Cohen, Roberta. "Developing an international system for internally displaced persons." *International Studies Perspectives* 7, no. 2 (2006): 87-101.
[17] *Ibid.*

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Despite the challenges that would make formulating a systematized international response to the issue of IDP difficult, Ms. Cohen, Mr. Deng and the United Nations thought it a necessary problem to address. This was because of two primary factors. Firstly, that the number of IDPs has steadily increased over the course of time and actually eclipses the number of refugees. Secondly, that "the highest mortality rates ever recorded during humanitarian emergencies have involved the internally displaced".[18] These two factors combined necessitate a response from the international community.

In light of this need and the acknowledged limitations, a Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement was produced by the United Nations. This document broadly but clearly defines who should qualify as an IDP, how durable solutions could be achieved for IDPs, and a general set of principles that could be referenced when interacting with IDPs and issues that relate to them. Within the guiding principles, the definition of an IDP is stated to be:

> persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.[19]

It is notable that this definition is not as restrictive as that required for recognition as a refugee or to receive asylum. Additionally, there is not one central or primary agency within the United Nations (UN) or without that has a mandate to assist IDPs in a vein similar to UNHCR's relationship with refugees as The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) "does not have a general or exclusive mandate for internally displaced people."[20]

In seeking solutions to displacement the common term used is to find 'durable solutions'. These solutions take three forms: sustainable return to place of origin, sustainable integration into current place of residence, or sustainable integrations into a new part of the

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[18] *Ibid.*

[19] Deng, Francis M. "Guiding principles on internal displacement." *International Migration Review* 33, no. 2 (1999): 484-493.

[20] UNHCR. "Note on the Mandate of The High Commissionerfor Refugees and His Office." (2013, October) from https://www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/526a22cb6/mandate-high-commissioner-refugees-office.html

country.[21] How to achieve these solutions and defining their 'sustainability' is a complex process with different groups and individuals having different interpretations depending on their desires and needs. For example, a government may want to return all displaced people to their places of origin to prevent societal friction whereas a displaced family may not want to leave a town where they have spent years living and working in displacement. Indeed, some (e.g. a university professor) may not even want to be referred to as IDPs due to negative stigmas associated with the term in some circles.[22]

This lack of central authority has caused problems. As pointed out by the United States Ambassador to the UN in 2000, "co-heads are no-heads".[23] As UNHCR, IOM, OCHA and other international agencies attempt to address (or avoid sole responsibility for) IDPs there is the tendency for the development of service gaps and duplication.[24] Similarly, as international agencies develop plans there is often the desire to implement blanket action plans that cover broad swaths of a population and which are able to be replicated in other IDP focused aid scenarios. These action plans are regularly based on assumptions rather than evidenced based research.[25] This can lead to insufficient action plans and interventions as many IDP situations are dissimilar and displaced people are, like their voluntarily migrating counterparts, following the global trend to gravitate towards urban centers. [26]

There is also increasing discussion among scholars and humanitarians about what differentiates IDPs in cities and the urban poor. To elucidate this difference, a seminal study on the needs of IDPs was conducted by Tufts University and IOM's Displacement Tracking Group. In this study, residents of a city were surveyed about their lives and afterwards, researchers went back and identified individuals who fit the profile of IDPs according to arrival time, reasons for departure from home, and other identifying factors. In this study it

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[21] IASC, IASC. "Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons,–." (2010).
[22] Appendix 2, CDO, 21:22
[23] Holbrooke, RIchard. 'A Borderline Difference'. *Washington Post*. (2000, May 8) as cited by Cohen, Roberta. "Strengthening Protection of IDPs-The UN's Role." *Geo. J. Int'l Aff.* 7 (2006): p. 105.
[24] Haver, Katherine. "Haiti Earthquake Response: Mapping and analysis of gaps and duplications in evaluations." In *Haiti Earthquake Response: Mapping and analysis of gaps and duplications in evaluations*. Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in humanitarian action (ALNAP); United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG); Development Assistance Committee (DAC)-Network on Development Evaluation, 2011.
[25] ICRC. Displaced in Cities : Experiencing and Responding to Urban Internal Displacement Outside Camps. (2019, February)
[26] *Ibid.*

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was identified that there were clear differences between IDPs and urban poor, even though they share similar issues in some cases.[27]

2.2 IDPs in Iraq Between the End of 2013 and 2019

According to the UN, the humanitarian and displacement crisis in Iraq as it was in 2017 was one of the "largest and most volatile in the world."[28] As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, waves of displacements began decades ago, but this thesis will focus on the more recent waves of displacement that started in late 2013, when ISIL began to gain power and control over different areas in Iraq. In 2013, 2.1 million Iraqis were still experiencing displacement due to previous internal conflicts and climate disasters.[29]

As ISIL gained territory, and faced increasingly aggressive pushback, displacement increased, leveling off to roughly 3.2 million displaced in October 2015.[30] In October 2016, IOM's DTM reported the number of IDPs to be 3,233,832 displaced persons, representing 538,972 IDP families, spread over 106 districts and 3,771 locations in Iraq. However, during this same period of October, DTM also identified 1,004,724 returns.[31] The progress on returns was offset when, at the turn of the year, the Iraqi army began its push to retake Mosul, ISIL's claimed capital.[32]

Refugees fleeing the entrenched civil war in Syria further compounded the humanitarian crisis in northern Iraq. The country has hosted roughly 250,000 Syrians since 2015.[33] In sum, IOM estimated that in 2017 an additional 11 million people in Iraq would be in need of humanitarian support, including three million Iraqis playing host to their new IDP and refugee neighbors.

Returns to places of origin were initially steady but have become more moderate in the past year. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), on May 31, 2018 there were 2,045,718 internally displaced Iraqis distributed in 103 regions/districts and 3,211 locations in Iraq with roughly 154,020 displaced

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[27] Davies, Anne, and Karen Jacobsen. "Profiling urban IDPs." *Forced Migration Review* 34 (2010): 13.

[28] OCHA. Iraq 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview. (2017, March 7)

[29] IDMC. "Iraq." *IDMC*, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2020, www.internal-displacement.org/countries/iraq.

[30] IOM. Displacement Tracking Matrix-Iraq Mission. Round 30. (2015, October), pp. 4-7

[31] IOM. Displacement Tracking Matrix-Iraq Mission. Round 56. (2016, October)

[32] IOM. Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq - Part One, April 2017

[33] UNHCR. "Situation Syria Regional Refugee Response." Accessed May 11, 2020. https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/5.

people residing in Sulaymaniyah. [34] Over a year later, by end 2019, the number of displaced Iraqis was 1,414,634 IDPs, distributed in 103 districts and 3,041 locations in Iraq, including 139,614 of them in Sulaymaniyah.[35] The majority of the respondents to IOM's surveys indicate they expect to remain displaced for a minimum of one more year.[36]

2.3 IDPs in Sulaymaniyah

2.3.1 The Kurdistan Region

Roughly one third of the over three million Iraqi individuals displaced since 2013 have moved into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).[37] The Kurdish population in Iraq is 8.4 million, which is equivalent to roughly 26.5% of the total Iraqi population. In addition to 1.8 million refugees and IDPs, Kurdistan has two main minority groups consisting of about 100,000 Christians, and 500,000 Turkmen.[38]

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) estimates that IDPs and refugees represent 28% of the total population of Kurdistan.[39] The KRG claims to have helped IDPs and refugees from different ethnicities and religions by providing them with housing, water, electricity, education (and school construction), health centers and various other supporting facilities.[40]

2.3.2 The Governorate: Sulaymaniyah

Sulaymaniyah is one of four governorates which comprise KRI. It is the southernmost district of KRI and shares its eastern border with Iran. The governorate shares domestic borders with Erbil, Kirkuk, Diyala and Salah Al-Din governorates which is also where a majority of IDPs

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[34] OCHA. Iraq: Internally displaced people by governorate as of 31 May 2018 (n.d.) retreived from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iraq_idps_and_returnees_by_governorate_dtm-iom_round _96_31_may_2018.pdf

[35] IOM. "IRAQ." Home Page - IRAQ DTM. Accessed May 1, 2020. http://iraqdtm.iom.int/.

[36] IOM. Reasons to Remain: Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq. (2018, November)

[37] Kaya, Zeynep N., and Kyra N. Luchtenberg. "Displacement and women's economic empowerment: voices of displaced women in the Kurdistan region of Iraq." (2018). P. 4

[38] Fondation-Institut kurde de Paris. "The Kurdish Population." Institutkurde.org. Accessed May 1, 2020. https://www.institutkurde.org/en/info/the-kurdish-population-1232551004.

[39] The Kurdish Project. "Kurds & the Refugee Crisis" thekurdishproject.org Accessed May 1, 2020. https://thekurdishproject.org/infographics/kurds-and-the-refugee-crisis/

[40] *Ibid.*

originate from. Of the four governorates within KRI, Sylaymaniyah received the lowest number of IDPs and they primarily originate from Kirkuk, Salahaddin and Diyala.[41]

The governorate was founded in 1784 by the Kurdish prince Ibrahim Pasha Baban who named the governorate after his father, "Sulayman Pasha".[42] It is composed of eleven Districts: Pshdar, Ranya, Dokan, Sharazoor, Sulaymaniyah, Sharbazher, Penjwin, Darbandikhan, Chamchamal, Kalar, and Halabja.[43] The most recent data from the Sulaymaniyah Statistics Directorate estimates the population of Sulaymaniyah to be 1,135,000 (2002), although an official census has not been carried out since 1987. The Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation (MoPDC)/UNDP Iraq Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) estimated that in 2004 the population was 1,715,585.[44]

The predominant religion in Sulaymaniyah is the Sunni branch of Islam. Shia Islam is also practiced, mainly by Kurds who were displaced from the Khanaqin District of Diyala Governorate by the previous regime of Sadaam Hussein. There are also a number of Chaldean Christians living in the city of Sulaymaniyah and a small minority of the Ahl Al-Haq minority who mostly live in the Halabja District.[45]

2.3.3 The Resident IDPs

According to the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, as of December 2019 there were roughly 140,000 IDPs within the Sulaymaniyah governorate with roughly 4.5 million IDPs having returned home from across Iraq since the start of data collection.[46] OCHA notes that 90% of IDPs in Sulaymaniyah live in non-camp settings (e.g. generally urban or peri-urban). Most are in stable conditions according to UNHCR which identifies only 21,318 persons of concern (PoC)[47] within the non-camp settings of the governorate.[48]. Furthermore, OCHA's

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[41] UNHCR. Displacement as challenge and opportunity (2016, April)
[42] Ako Ali, Meer. "Sulaimany: 227 years of glory." *The Kurdistan Tribune*, November 13, 20111.
https://web.archive.org/web/20191009015939/https://kurdistantribune.com/sulaimany-years-of-glory/
[43] UNHCR. 202001 UNHCR Iraq Factsheet January 2020 (n.d.)
[44] UNHCR. SULAYMANIYAH GOVERNORATE ASSESSMENT REPORT. (2006, August)
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] IOM. "IRAQ." Home Page - IRAQ DTM. Accessed May 1, 2020. http://iraqdtm.iom.int/.
[47] "A person of concern is any person whom the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Refugee Agency, considers a refugee, internally displaced person (IDP), asylum-seeker, or stateless person, with some additional persons not fitting these criteria" from Titus, Maxwell. "CISTP Analysis of Global Distribution of Persons of Concern." Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Terrorism and Peace - James Madison University. (2017, September 15)
https://www.jmu.edu/news/cistp/2017/titus-maxwell-global-distribution-persons-of-concern.pdf and not all IDPs will be considered PoC
[48] UNHCR. "Situation Syria Regional Refugee Response." 2020.

latest report from 2019 shows that 12% of the IDPs live in camps and 88% of them live in rental houses.[49] It is important to mention that IDPs who live outside the camps do not receive the same level of support from the humanitarian stakeholders as those in the camps, which means that they rely more on the host community.[50] Around 84% of the IDPs in Sulaymaniyah adhere to the Sunni sect of Islam, which affects on the demographics of the governorate. In addition to the Muslim Sunni the governorate hosts 2-3% of Christians (various sects) and Yazidi.[51] In terms of ethnicity, 89.9% of the IDPs in Sulaymaniyah are Arabs. The rest are minorities of Kurds, Assyrian and Chaldean.[52]

Despite the large distance between the two governorates, most of the IDPs who arrived in Sulaymaniyah after 2014 are from Anbar. Moreover, Sulaymaniyah is part of Kurdistan, where Kurdish is the dominant language. This in itself is an obstacle for the IDPs, because their main language is Arabic. Many of those IDPs chose Sulaymaniyah because there were blocked transportation routes to areas that were closer to them than Sulaymaniyah, in addition to that others chose the governorate because they already had family members present in the governorate.[53] IDP have accounted for the population increase of roughly 20% and they mostly live in the outlying areas of the city rather than in its immediate geographic area. Despite this substantial increase, there has not been evidence of conflict between residents and IDPs. In fact, denizens of Sulaymaniyah interviewed by IOM tended to have a negative view of IDPs in general but when they spoke about specific interaction with IDPs all accounts were positive.[54]

2.4 The Humanitarian Actors

The humanitarian network involved with IDPs consists of three groups of actors: the government and its institutions, the international humanitarian actors, and the local humanitarian actors. Within each group there are different actors who may have different

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[49] OCHA. "IRAQ Al-Sulaymaniyah Governorate profile and monthly humanitarian response" (n.d.) https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2020_02_03_al_sulaymaniyah_governorate_profile_v0.pdf

[50] OCHA. Iraq: "Internally displaced persons must be presented with options beyond life in a camp" – Humanitarian Coordinator". (2019, March 4) https://www.unocha.org/story/iraq-%E2%80%9Cinternally-displaced-persons-must-be-presented-options-beyond-life-camp%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%93-humanitarian

[51] IOM. Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq - Part One, April 2017. (2017, April 30)

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] *Ibid.*

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operating procedures, missions, statuses, or histories. Despite this, where the actors in these groups interact with actors in other groups, repeat or patterned actions and dynamics are evident. These actions and dynamics have been identified by other scholars and are reflected in the terminology used by informants and organizational documents as will be elaborated later.

2.4.1 The Government: The Ministry of Migration and Displacement

As a sovereign nation, the government of Iraq maintains ultimate authority over how IDPs are assisted, what international organizations are allowed into the country, and how international and local organizations operate within its borders. The Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) has had the responsibility of assisting refugees, IDPs and returnees since August 2003. However, according to IOM the ministry was initially inefficient at effectively assisting the majority of those in need. This appears to stem from an internal government issue with IDP registration within Iraq, IDPs become eligible and entitled to receive help and support by first registering with the MoMD at its sub offices within each governorate. However, the registration system initially had a crucial defect at its inception due to a discrepancy between the criteria set by MoMD offices in defining IDPs as compared to the internationally recognized criteria.[55] But according to a recent IOM study, since the wave of displacement caused by ISIL, there has been a significant positive change in the process of registering IDPs. The study shows that 94% of families were able to be registered with MoMD. Some IDPs had difficulties registering due to a lack of personal documents or the fact that their displacement occurred at times other than those specified in the acceptable timeframe for registration but those seem to be a small minority of affected people and is not a systemic issue.[56]

2.4.2 The International Actors

The number of international actors in Sulaymaniyah has varied according to the intensity of need and availability of funds. This group consists of UN Agencies such as UNHCR, IOM, OCHA and international organizations such as Oxfam, the International Rescue Committee, and the Danish Refugee Council. These organizations tend to manage camps for IDPs and

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[55] IOM. Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq - Part One, April 2017. (2017, April 30)
[56] *Ibid.*

refugees. They also provide direct services to out-of-camp PoCs and fund research initiatives. Their presences (in terms of personnel and project funds) in the governorate has fluctuated with the severity of the crisis as compared to national and global needs.

The International Organization for Migration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been working in Iraq since 2003 and maintains three main offices and 16 sub-offices across Iraq's 18 governorates.[57] Since 2013 IOM has been involved in a range of activities targeting the local population, refugees (e.g. from Syria), and the displaced peoples of Iraq. These activities include, but are not limited to camp management, delivery of cash and material aid, and knowledge production.[58] Since the beginning of the current displacement crisis in 2013 IOM's budget within Iraq has changed substantially with in-country spending amounting to USD 6.4M in 2019, [59] USD 86.5M in 2015[60] and USD 30.2M in 2013[61]. IOM's funding requests have jumped exponentially since the beginning of the crisis. Since the inception of the crisis, labeled as the Anbar Crisis in Iraq, funding requests have jumped from USD 11M for the first six months of 2014[62] to USD 163.6M in 2015[63] and USD 132.7M in 2019[64]. As of 2019 the organization has 1599 staff within the country of which 1513 are classified as nationals. Within the governorate of Sulaymaniyah IOM currently assists with IDP returns and provides a variety of modes of assistance to IDPs within the governorate which will be detailed further on.

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[57] IOM. "Iraq 2019" (n.d.) https://humanitariancompendium.iom.int/appeals/iraq-2019
[58] IOM. "IOM Iraq" (n.d.) https://iraq.iom.int/iom-iraq
[59] IOM. "C/11/8 Program and Budget for 2020" (2019, October 29) https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/110/C-110-8%20-%20Programme%20and%20Budget%20for%202020%20%2829.10.19%29.pdf p. 183
[60] IOM. "C/107/3 Financial Report For The Year Ended 31 December 2015." (2016, May 18) https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/107/C-107-3%20-%20Financial%20Report%20for%202015.pdf p. 68
[61] IOM. "C/105/4 Financial Report For The Year Ended 31 December 2013." (2014, May 7) http://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/migrated_files/about-iom/governing-bodies/en/council/105/C-105-4.pdf p. 60
[62] IOM. "IOM Humanitarian Compendium 2014." (2014). https://humanitariancompendium.iom.int/sites/default/files/humanitarian_compendium/files/IOM%20Humanitarian%20Compendium%202014%20optimized.pdf p. 33
[63] IOM. "IOM Humanitarian Compendium 2015 Revised Requirements" (2015, September 1). https://humanitariancompendium.iom.int/sites/default/files/humanitarian_compendium/files/Humanitarian%20Compendium%2005.10.2015%20%28small%29%20optimized2.pdf p. 2
[64] IOM. "Iraq 2019" (n.d.) https://humanitariancompendium.iom.int/appeals/iraq-2019

2.4.3 The Local Actors

In 2019 there were 16 local NGOs operating within Sulaymaniyah according to NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq (NCCI's) operations dashboard.[65] They focus on both IDP and host community issues and their staffing and programming fluctuates based on funding. An organization called the NGO Coordination Committee of Iraq is used to facilitate communication and efficiency among them. Since at least 2015 there is evidence of a desire for more support from international organizations so that they can improve their capacity.[66]

Civil Development Organization

Civil Development Organization (CDO) is "a non-governmental, national, humanitarian, independent and non-profit organization" founded in 2001 which currently operates in the three Kurdish governorates in addition to Kirkuk and Diyalah, and Salahaddin.[67] The organisation has been involved in mitigating displacement events since the late 2000's as well as the recent ISIL displacement crisis. During the height of the most recent event, CDO employed 360 staff, all Iraqi nationals, but had reduced their staff to 64 individuals by the start of 2020. Founded as a legal assistance organization, CDO has now expanded into aid provision, legal assistance, and human rights programs. CDO assists both Syrian refugees living in Iraq as well as IDPs and host communities. The organization works in partnership with multiple international agencies.[68]

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[65] NCCI. "Iraq Geographic Sectors Map" (n.d.)
https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiZWZmN2VhNzQtYmY3Zi00NmFmLThiMjItMTg4ZTc1ZmRjNGRm IiwidCI6IjI3ODA2YTFmLWU0YWQtNGM5NC1hZDU3LTIxOGZjNWFjNTk1ZCIsImMiOjEwfQ%3D%3D
[66] NCCI. "Reaching out to NGOs in Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah." (2015, November 3)
https://www.ncciraq.org/en/about/about-ncci/ncci-updates/item/13529-reaching-out-to-ngos-in-dohuk-and-sulay maniyah
[67] CDO. "About Us." (n.d.) https://cdo-iraq.org/about-us/
[68] Appendix 2, CDO, 44:28

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section situates the authors' original research within contemporary usage of one body of theory, Network Theory (NT), and one method of analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Both the chosen theory and method have extensive use by social scholars and this section will situate the research within this field. Network theory has a history of use for understanding complex humanitarian networks and their results however its usage within the field of investigation (i.e. humanitarian interaction in Iraq) is relatively new. Desk research revealed only one paper employing NT which used it to investigate the emergency humanitarian response to displacement within Iraq during 2014 and 2015.[69]

The authors have chosen CDA as a complementary method of analysis so that the discursive relations between the actors involved and the how those actors frame these interactions can be clearly understood. By understanding how parts of a network interact to produce outcomes, and how they frame this interaction, the authors hope to provide a more comprehensive overview of the results of their interactions than could be provided through the use of NT or CDA alone.

3.1 Network Theory

In today's globalized world, objects, ideas, people, and organizations are becoming interconnected in novel and convoluted ways. Scholars such as Mark Bevier take this concept of interconnectedness and have identified them to be networks which provide a, "framework for the efficient horizontal coordination of the interests and actions of public and private corporate actors, mutually dependent on their resources'".[70] Indeed, one of the preeminent universities focusing on organizational communication, the USC-Annenberg School of Communications and Journalism, notes that "network theory is one of the central theories of organizational communication."[71] As put by Borgatti and Halpern, "[...] network analysis consists of characterizing network structures (e.g., centrality) and relating these to group and

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[69] Buijsse, Sandra. "Multi-Actor Response to the Internal Displacement of Iraqi Nationals: A Field Study on Coordination of the Humanitarian Emergency Response in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq." (2015).
[70] Börzel, Tanja A. (1998) 'Organizing Babylon: On the Different Conceptions of Policy Networks', Public Administration 76(2): 253–73 as in Bevir, M. ed., 2010. *The SAGE handbook of governance*. Sage. p. 19
[71] USC Annenberg. "What You Need to Know About Network Theory." (n.d.)
https://communicationmgmt.usc.edu/blog/what-you-need-to-know-about-network-theory/

node outcomes."[72] The actors, or objects as they are sometimes called, "may represent, for example, human beings, products, ingredients, diseases, or brain regions [...]".[73] Within this analysis the actor objects will be the organizations within the groups defined earlier.

The efficiency of networks and the added value (for both PoC and aid giving organizations) that they provide has been explicitly recognized by UN agencies such as OCHA. OCHA is the UN agency tasked with coordinating humanitarian response between government, international actors, and local agencies. Valerie Amos, the 2010-2015 Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (i.e. the director of OCHA), believes that the segment of the international community focused on humanitarian aid can assist communities in need more effectively by bringing together a diverse set of actors. To do this they develop and facilitate the creation of networks within specific contexts to more effectively fulfil the mandates of participating organizations. According to Amos, "effective coordination is the hidden force multiplier in emergency response. With coordination, one plus one plus one does not equal three; it equals five, or ten. It reduces duplication and competition, and allows different agencies and organizations to complement each other and give added value".[74] This is network theory but expressed from the results oriented view of an organization director. Instead of speaking of "nodes" that come from actor interaction they refer to the "added value" of coordinated agency interaction.

Despite this overt acknowledgement of the necessity of coordination and years of experience facilitating coordination there is still room to improve. Scholars studying inter-organizational interactions have used network theory and its derivatives to better understand strengths and weaknesses of the current coordination status quo. Indeed a 2013 investigation into the appropriateness of actor network theory to assess humanitarian response in crisis situations found that, "the usefulness of the technique could nevertheless be confirmed."[75] Network theories have also been used to investigate the effectiveness of

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[72] Borgatti, Stephen P., and Daniel S. Halgin. "On network theory." *Organization science* 22, no. 5 (2011): p. 1169.
[73] USC Annenberg. "What You Need to Know About Network Theory." (n.d.)
[74] OCHA. "Coordination to Save Lives: History and Emerging Challenges." (2012) https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Coordination%20to%20Save%20Lives%20History%20and%20Emerging%20Challenges.pdf p. iii
[75] Brewer, Graham, Aiobheann McVeigh, and Jason von Meding. "AN EVALUATION OF THE USEFULNESS OF ACTOR NETWORK THEORY IN UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITIES OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE IN POST-DISASTER RECONSTRUCTION." *ArchNet-IJAR* 7.3 (2013).

humanitarian response in Haiti, Cuba, Nepal and the 2004 tsunami that hit Indonesia.[76] [77] [78] Furthermore, a recent study regarding the context this paper is investigating was published and supported by the UN in 2015.[79] However it is important to note that while the appropriateness of this method has been established, it has not yet hit a critical mass as results for "network theory", "policy network theory" and "systemic network theory" in conjunction with humanitarian response returned less than 7,000 results (with "actor network" making up more than 96% of returns) during an April 10, 2020 Google Scholar search.[80]

3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA as an analytical approach is grounded in the "poststructuralist conception of discourse" which paints language as a way of manifesting and organizing "'concepts, knowledge, and experience'" and "'excludes alternative forms of organization'".[81] In readings of Lasswell, MacDonald further hones in on the importance of the exclusionary aspect of discourse, arguing that "discourse and myths are constitutive of the distribution of power and opportunities [which are also] modified in response to changes in power distribution".[82] More succinctly, as put by Hardy, CDA allows the researcher to, "explore the ways in which actors engage in discursive activities, the outcomes that result from this activity, and the ways in which other actors attempt to resist these activities".[83] In sum, CDA allows for investigation

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[76] Weber, Christina, Klaus Sailer, and Bernhard Katzy. "Disaster relief management-A dynamic network perspective." *International Technology Management Conference*. IEEE, 2012.
[77] Brewer "AN EVALUATION OF THE USEFULNESS OF ACTOR NETWORK THEORY IN UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITIES OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE IN POST-DISASTER RECONSTRUCTION." (2013).
[78] Thapa, Devinder, Nama Budhathoki, and Bjørn Erik Munkvold. "Analyzing Crisis Response through Actor-network Theory: The Case of Kathmandu Living Labs." *CAIS* 41 (2017): 19.
[79] Buijsse, Sandra. "Multi-Actor Response to the Internal Displacement of Iraqi Nationals: A Field Study on Coordination of the Humanitarian Emergency Response in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq." (2015).
[80] The authors conducted this piece of research independently
[81] Finlayson, A. "Language." In F. Ashe, A. Finlayson, M. Lloyd, I. MacKenzie, J. Martin, & S. O'Neill (Eds.), *Contemporary social and political theory: An introduction.* London, UK: Open University Press (1999) p. 62. Quoted in Park, Yoosun, and Rupaleem Bhuyan. "Whom should we serve? A discourse analysis of social workers' commentary on undocumented immigrants." *Journal of Progressive Human Services* 23.1 (2012): p. 21
[82] MacDONALD, C. H. R. I. S. T. I. N. E. "The value of discourse analysis as a methodological tool for understanding a land reform program." *Policy Sciences* 36.2 (2003): 151-173.
[83] Hardy, Cynthia. "Researching organizational discourse." *International studies of management & organization* 31.3 (2001): 25-47.

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to what something does (i.e. the results of the relational power produced or reinforced) rather than what something is (i.e. merely defining the relational power).[84]

The linguistically focused nature of CDA does not necessitate a background in linguistics. Indeed, the method is an interdisciplinary one that has been used to understand city planning, land reform programs in Kenya, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Palestinian NGO relations.[85] [86] [87] By focusing on the language used by NGO and UN agency staff, the authors will be able to better clarify the "'knowledge-base' economy" at play within Sulaymaniyah where by specific actors import or develop knowledge surrounding IDPs. A knowledge-based economy is outlined by Fairclough who cites Lyotard as an economy that is based on specific discourses (which in turn produce knowledge) such as, for example, "'teamwork'". That is to say, specific language and meaning is developed for effectively producing and practicing the pre-defined concept of 'teamwork'.

MacDonald makes a particularly apt comparison by noting how educational capital can be turned in to well paid jobs. Similarly, the discourse around IDP assistance can be viewed as an established knowledge-base economy that the actors operate within. Knowledge is turned into funding opportunities which then turns into various modes of IDP assistance and organizational funding.[88]

Through preparatory research it is evident that CDA has not yet been used to understand the dynamics between Iraqi NGOs and international aid organizations within the IDP assistance sector of the KRI or greater Iraq in general. However, CDA has proven efficacy at illuminating the results of specific discourses in other, analogous contexts. As referenced earlier, Johnson 2014 has used CDA to assess CSO ownership within a Palestinian context where the foreign organization USAID exerts heavy handed influence over Palestinian NGOs. Through this investigation, two forms of discourse were identified, one where the Palestinian organizations emphasize their ownership and motivational agency at

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[84] Park, Yoosun, and Rupaleem Bhuyan. "Whom should we serve? A discourse analysis of social workers' commentary on undocumented immigrants." (2012)

[85] Johnsen, Erling Hess. *Whose Civil Society? A critical discourse analysis of USAID and Palestinian NGOs*. MS thesis. 2014.

[86] Michira, James Nyachae. "The language of politics: A CDA of the 2013 Kenyan presidential campaign discourse." *International journal of education and Research* 2, no. 1 (2014): 1-18.

[87] Vaara, Eero, Virpi Sorsa, and Pekka Pälli. "On the force potential of strategy texts: a critical discourse analysis of a strategic plan and its power effects in a city organization." *Organization* 17.6 (2010): 685-702.

[88] MacDONALD, C. H. R. I. S. T. I. N. E. "The value of discourse analysis as a methodological tool for understanding a land reform program." *Policy Sciences* 36.2 (2003): p. 156

changing their society for the better verses one where USAID turns Palestinian NGOs in to vehicles for the entrenchment of the current status quo that benefits American and Israeli interests.[89] In a similar vein, yet very different context, Haddara and Lingard used CDA to understand the results of specific discourses around interprofessional cooperation within a hospital setting. In this analysis it was found that two different discourses that produce utilitarian (where interprofessional cooperation is viewed as supporting a more positive and experimental approach to patient care) and emancipatory (where by power relations between healthcare practitioners is made more equal) views of interprofessional collaboration in clinical care and medical education.[90]

By using CDA to analyse international and local NGO framing of their assistance to IDPs this paper will further expand the scope of possibilities for this method by illuminating the power relations, and the results of these relations, which exist within the IDP assistance framework of Sulaymaniyah.

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[89] Johnsen. *Whose Civil Society? A critical discourse analysis of USAID and Palestinian NGOs*. (2014)
[90] Haddara, Wael, and Lorelei Lingard. "Are we all on the same page? A discourse analysis of interprofessional collaboration." *Academic Medicine* 88, no. 10 (2013): 1509-1515.

4. METHODOLOGY

The following chapter will introduce the methodological framework of this research thesis so that the findings can be seen to be well grounded. This chapter will explain the approach to conducting interviews with organizations in Sulaymaniyah, which were conducted via Skype, in addition to that, it will also explain the limitations the authors faced during the process of completing this research.

4.1 Interview as a Method

This research pursues a qualitative approach. A variety of information, data, reports as well as studies were collected, in addition to two qualitative interviews conducted with organizations working with IDPs in Sulaymaniyah. One interview was conducted with a local organization and the other one was conducted with an international organization.

The approach was adopted because most material found during preparatory research focused on IDPs and less on the relationship and the interaction between local and international organizations working with IDPs. By interviewing organization management rather than reading about project outcomes the authors hoped to gain a better understanding of how the organizations perceive each other and thus how this perception affects their actions. By using interviews, the researchers hoped to gather, "information about a person's knowledge, values, preferences and attitudes" which would thus allow us to better understand the processes at work within the NGOs in focus.[91] Consider a group project, if one would like to learn about how the group members worked together to overcome obstacles it is much better to ask them about their experience rather than read their final paper.

As the scope of this research aims to investigate the processes and dynamics between local and international organizations, the researchers have elected to use semi-structured interviews with current organization employees who have familiarity with the conditions and dynamics within Sulaymaniyah between 2013 and 2019. Tansey argues that this style of interview research is "particularly good evidence for process-tracing research.".[92] Bleich and

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[91] Gray, David E. *Doing research in the business world*. Sage Publications Limited, 2019.

[92] Tansey, Oisín. "Process tracing and elite interviewing: a case for non-probability sampling." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40, no. 4 (2007): 765-772. As cited by Bleich, Erik, and Robert Pekkanen. "How to report interview data." *Interview research in political science* 1 (2013): 84-105.

Pekkanen do note, however, that there are possible problems associated with using interview data as a primary source of evidence. Notable problems relate to representation, quality of information obtained, and the accuracy of reporting.[93] Rhodes (2002) also calls attention to the issues inherent in using interview data as a source of evidence, noting, similar to Belich and Pekkanen, that the nominally unseen interviewer inherently affects the interview data because they are the individuals who develop the questions and process the responses.[94]

Regarding representation, this study was conducted within a limited time frame and under regional and global issues (namely the extrajudicial assisnation of the Iranian general Sulaimani at the project's inception[95] and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic[96]). As such, the authors were unable to visit the geographical location of inquiry and had to rely on Skype interviews. To secure interviews, the researchers looked through lists of local organizations affiliated with international organizations assisting IDPs in Sulaymaniyah.[97] [98] In selecting organizations from the referenced lists, the researchers visited the website and social media platforms such as Facebook pages of each organization to clarify if there were ongoing projects within Sulaymaniyah. As neither researcher knows Kurdish and only one knows Arabic, to provide equal representation the authors decided to contact only the organizations that had ongoing projects focusing on IDPs in Sulaymaniyah and that provided information in English. By focusing on English the interviewers hoped to avoid the "perils of inaccurate reporting" such as misunderstanding what an interviewee is attempting to communicate which is noted by Bleich and Pekkanen.[99]

The researchers obtained interviews with IOM's Head of Returns and Recovery unit and the Director of CDO. The Head of Returns and Recovery was referred to the researchers

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[93] *Ibid.*

[94] Rhodes, Carl. "Ghostwriting research: Positioning the researcher in the interview text." *Qualitative inquiry* 6.4 (2000): 511-525.

[95] Wright, Robin. "The breathtaking unravelling of the middle east after Suleimanis death." *The New Yorker*, January 6, 2020.
https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/the-breathtaking-unravelling-of-the-middle-east-after-suleimanis-death

[96] WHO. "WHO announced COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic." March 12, 2020
http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/news/news/2020/3/who-announces-covid-19-outbreak-a-pandemic

[97] UNFPA. "The Assessment of the Needs of and The Services Provided to Gender- Based Violence Survivors in Iraq." (2019, July 17)

[98] NCCI. "Iraq Geographic Sectors Map" (n.d.)
https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiZWZmN2VhNzQtYmY3Zi00NmFmLThiMjItMTg4ZTc1ZmRjNGRmIiwidCI6IjI3ODA2YTFmLWU0YWQtNGM5NC1hZDU3LTIxOGZjNWFjNTk1ZCIsImMiOjEwfQ%3D%3D

[99] Bleich. "How to report interview data." (2013) p. 88

by IOM's country director who believed that the individual in this position could provide the most relevant information. The researchers agreed because of the profile of the unit. The Director of CDO was selected for an interview because he could give the most comprehensive information about the organization's actions as well as its interactions with other organizations. Individuals at lower levels of each organization (e.g. a field operative or case manager) could have been solicited for interviews however their responses would have been narrower and could not have provided the comprehensive inter-organization perspective offered by staff in a management or supervisory role.

On a final note, the researchers believe it important to provide a brief note about themselves so that the reader may have a better understanding of the dynamics at play during the conducted interviews. This is in acknowledgment of the fact that as researchers, personal identities such as "gender [...], age, social class, race and religion" could have played an important factor in how and what information was shared during interviews.[100] The first researcher, Ms. Falastin Ismail is Palestinian-Danish who speaks Arabic, Danish, and English fluently. She has extensive experience in the NGO sector both internationally and within Denmark. Mr. Soren Klaverkamp is an American who has been studying in Denmark since late 2018. He speaks only English but has experience living, working, and studying in Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan.

4.2 Considerations

According to Kvale and Brinkman, the knowledge gathered through qualitative interviews is a type of knowledge produced at the moment and the context of the interview specifically, which means that the knowledge may not be easily related to other contexts.[101] The researchers are aware of the fact that the interviewees in their case are employees that represent their NGO, this may lead to present their organization as a good and ideal workplace on the one hand, and on the other hand to exclude or avoid touching on topics that could shed a negative light on their organizations.

Another issue is the limited amount of information which will make it hard to generalise the data collected, according to Bleich and Pekkanen. Due to the scope of the

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[100] Gray. Doing research in the real world. 2004
[101] Kvale, Steinar, and Svend Brinkmann. *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing.* Sage, 2009. P. 72-73

thesis, the time limit, in addition to the difficulties of conducting the interviews as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in delays and cancelations of interviews in Sulaymaniyah, the number of interviews was short of the researchers initial goals.

In addition to that, interviewees were very busy with the global crisis which might have shifted the priority from dealing with IDPs returning to their homes, to protecting IDPs and assisting them with how to deal with the virus in their host areas.

Therefore the authors decided that instead of trying to impose the hypothesis and generalization on the basis of the interviews that were conducted, they would use the interviews to highlight and demonstrate phenomena and subjects that were learned about through the interviews and that may not have been clear without interviews. In addition to that, they would learn about the patterns of work by organizations and ways of cooperating among them. For example, a focus on the relationship of local organizations and international organizations working in the field could highlight the patterns and methods of their work with each other, supplementing the documents, reports and official letters used in the analysis and discussion of the topic.

In consideration of the research question, the government actor group has been outlined previously so that their relation to the international and local actor group is noted. However the aim of this paper is to focus on the interactions between those actors which are not part of a government. In light of this, attempts to contact the government for interviews were not made. Their actions as they relate to the actors in question are thus detailed when relevant but not elaborated on in terms of motivations or reactions because this is outside the scope of the research.

4.3 The Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was applied to this research, which means that the authors created a guide containing a list of subjects that they were interested in searching for and obtaining more information about - such as the background of the organization, how the organization worked with IDPs, the type of cooperation and communication between local and international organizations working in the field of IDPs, and the long-term strategies of the organizations in the field of supporting IDPs.

The subjects are divided into several topics. Each topic contains different questions listed in its field. It should be noted that there are slight variations between the international organizations guide and the one for local organizations, but most of the basic questions were the same as those of all the organizations interviewed.

Written questions were the basis of the interviews, but there was room and place to ask new questions during the interviews. This means that the researchers were able to ask more questions, if they found new information said by the interviewees was interesting and valuable to develop their research. In addition, a number of questions may be asked if the information provided by the persons interviewed did not address or clarify the topic. The interview guides to local organizations and international organizations are included in appendix 1 and 4.

4.4 Inductive Approach

In their first step, researchers began working on this thesis by collecting data and conducting interviews. Their second step was to consider relevant and interesting findings that were obtained from data collection and interviews. The last step was to choose the theoretical concept and conduct the analysis.

The researchers found that the most effective way to analyze qualitative data is through using the inductive approach. As Strauss and Corbin describe the process of inductive analysis: "The researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data".[102] David R. Thoma describes the main reason for the inductive approach is: "[...] to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies.".[103]

4.5 Limitations

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[102] Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of qualitative research techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications, 1998. p. 12

[103] Thomas, D.R., 2006. A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American journal of evaluation*, *27*(2), p. 238

4.5.1 Field Access

When the authors started researching the issue of IDPs in Iraq, they quickly found that the topic was very broad. Large areas and numbers of people were directly affected by the crisis and had to flee their homes, which would be difficult to cover in the time frame of this research.

The decision was made to geographically limit the research to the Sulaymaniyah governorate of KRI, which in turn was also affected by the same period of significant displacement. Sulaymaniyah was selected as the governorate of focus due to perceived ease of access and the possibility of more difficult IDP integration due to historical disagreements between Kurds and Iraqi Arabs. The governorate had been identified as a relatively secure one in the region and at the outset of writing the authors planned to visit the areas to conduct in-person interviews. As a visit became more difficult the decision to remain focused on Sulaymaniyah was reached because the researcher's knowledge about the governorate was substantial at that point and changing focus to another governorate would have made interviews more difficult to achieve within the time frame allowed for publication.

The decision to rely on Skype interviews was reaffirmed after the United States assassinated Iranian General Sulaimani and the US government issued a warning to Americans asking them to avoid travel to Iraq.[104] Therefore the researchers decided to refrain from traveling and conducting face-to-face interviews with organizations and instead conduct remote interviews.

4.5.2 The COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis

After the COVID-19 virus epidemic was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), securing interviews became more difficult as scheduled interviews were cancelled and requests for interviews were not responded to. OCHA sent an email to cancel the interview two hours ahead of time, they also apologize for being unable to provide any interview in the near future. Their explanation was that they were operating under emergency.

Other organizations said that they were very busy with the crisis and could not contribute to the interview, while others were working from home and their priorities shifted,

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[104] US Embassy & Consulate in Iraq. "Security Alert – U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq, January 3, 2020." (2020, January 3) from https://iq.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-baghdad-iraq-january-3-2020/

so it was difficult for them to set aside time for an interview. This means that more time was spent trying to find other organizations in order to interview them and also having to compromise on interviewing organisations that work less with IDPs than initially chosen. Having described the method used for this research, and the limitations faced throughout the working on this research, the paper will now turn to the theory.

5. THEORETICAL APPROACH

The following section will detail the analytical theory and framework used to answer the three sub-questions and overarching research question. While Network Theory could possibly be used to answer the research and sub-questions on its own it is evident to the researchers from the data gathering process that the inclusion of a critical discourse analysis can provide a more complete answer to all of the questions. There are power imbalances within the network being described that network theory does not address. CDA can help understand the results of these imbalances on the network's outcome Thus, the researchers will provide a succinct definition and outline for each theory and how this theory will be used to address each question that has been posed.

5.1 Network Theory

In line with Bevier's network identification, the analysis will use systemic network theory, a derivative of network theory, as a way to view and clarify the ways in which different actors interact under the umbrella objective of assisting IDPs within Sulaymaniyah. The use of a form of network theory to approach the organizational interactions in Sulaymaniyah is appropriate because the interactions are clearly synonymous with that of a network. According to theoretical physician Markus Schirmer, network theory involves the study of the way elements in a network interact. "A simple way of understanding a network is by assuming that a set of objects are connected by some sort of link" and "the set of objects may represent, for example, human beings, products, ingredients, diseases, or brain regions, whereas the links are relationships or structural connections."[105] In the context of this paper the objects of study are the organizations interacting within the network which is focused on IDPs assistance.

Borgattia and Halgin specify a network as that which "consists of a set of actors or nodes along with a set of ties of a specified type (such as friendship) that link them."[106] To refine this approach further, a systemic network theory will be employed. This theory originates in the field of cybernetics and focuses on how goal oriented systems are controlled

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[105] USC Annenberg. "What You Need to Know About Network Theory." (n.d.)
[106] Borgatti. "On network theory." (2011) p. 1169

and regulated through inputs, outputs, and feedback loops. Thus systems theory is appropriate for use in this context because understanding how the network is structured and controlled is crucial to understanding how the outputs of the network are affected.[107]

The analysis will first focus on defining and clarifying the network in question by outlining the organizations involved and defining the linkages between them and other actors in the network. For example, CDO is linked with UNHCR by an official 'partnership' in which UNHCR provides funds to CDO to implement projects they negotiated and planned. In this way an answer will be provided to the first sub-question and legitimize the framing of the inter-organization interactions as that of a constructed network. Clearly defining this network is particularly important because, as noted by Bevir the paper is looking at a mode, "of governance that [is] increasingly hybrid and multijurisdictional, linking plural stakeholders in complex networks".[108]

By understanding how the network actors interact, and how this interaction self-governs their actions and thus outputs, the theory will provide part of the framework necessary to achieve an answer to the overarching research question and its sub-questions.

5.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

In conjunction with system network theory elaborated earlier, this paper will also use CDA to describe how the actors view and frame their inter-organization interactions as well as the results of these interactions on the programs they run. This is done to provide a more complete answer to sub-questions two and three than that which could be provided by network analysis alone.

As outlined by one of the pre-eminent practitioners Norman Fairclough, CDA provides the means for an analyst to better understand the linkages between texts (in this case transcribed interviews and published documents such as research papers and government documents) and social interactions. The ultimate "objective is to show how language figures in social processes" and thus illuminate how possibly opaque relations of power are manifested and reinforced through language.[109] Within the context of this research paper the

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[107] Gray. *Doing research in the business world*. (2019) p. 91-92

[108] Bevir, Mark, ed. *The SAGE handbook of governance*. Sage, (2010). p. 11

[109] Fairclough, Norman. "The discourse of new labour: Critical discourse analysis." *Discourse as data: A guide for analysis* 1 (2001): 229-266.

social interactions are viewed as inter-organization interactions. Since these interactions are conducted by people these interactions are necessarily social interactions.

In the employment of CDA, the researchers will follow the five steps as laid out by Fairclough. These steps are as follows. First a problem with a linguistic aspect will be identified. This will then be followed by identifying obstacles to addressing the aforementioned problem and attempting to clarify who or what benefits from this lack of attention. Once these factors have been clarified, the CDA will delve into ways past the problem and ultimately reflects critically on the completed process.[110]

In general, the problem in question is how the established network affects IDP assistance efforts in Sulaymaniyah. The actors in this network attend meetings together, plan projects together, and provide instructions and feedback to each other. However, as is evident from research and the authors' personal experiences, there is an unequal distribution of power within this network that affects its output (i.e. the impact of humanitarian aid to IDPs has been lessened because of the power dynamics within this network). CDA will allow the researchers to describe how the network shapes the work these network members perform and thus why there is a difference in their outputs. This work, in conjunction network theory as outlined above, will provide a complete answer to sub-questions two and three.

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[110] Fairclough, Norman. "The discourse of new labour: Critical discourse analysis." *Discourse as data: A guide for analysis* 1 (2001): 229-266.

6. ANALYSIS

6.1 Establishing the Network

The first task in approaching the research question is to establish that the scene being approached is that of a system. In raw terms, a system can be understood as, "a set of units that interact to produce a range of outcomes.'[111] The units (hereafter referred to as actors) can be things such as people, objects, organizations, and ideas. In the context of this paper, actors are represented by organizations such as local NGOs, UN Agencies, and the Government of Iraq. Within Aldrich's conception of an organization, an organization is defined as a "goal-directed, boundary-maintaining, information-processing activity systems".[112] CDO, one of the local NGO organizations interviewed, clearly describes its goals in the "about us" section of its website, maintains its boundaries by hiring professional staff and not allowing actions to be taken under its name without approval. It also authors program evaluations, and year-in-review documents which detail and present information about its outputs, practices, financial expenditures, etc. These sorts of activities are also practiced by all other actors in focus and thus are organizations.

As the actors interact in the context of Iraq in general, and Sulaymaniyah specifically, they produce outcomes from their interactions such as aid programs for beneficiaries, status reports about human movement and efficacy of aid delivery, capital that moves through multiple organizations, and publicity about each other, to name just a few. Therefore the actors can clearly be seen to be interacting (both directly and indirectly) and producing outcomes, thus further matching the profile of a system. To add more credence to this label, it can also be established that the system in question has a similar makeup to ones that have operated in other emergency situations: the humanitarian assistance community (HAC). The HAC, as outlined by Seybolt, is readily identified as a systemic network and consists of "people in need, governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, political missions, military contingents and donors"[113]

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[111] Seybolt, Taylor B. "Harmonizing the humanitarian aid network: Adaptive change in a complex system." *International Studies Quarterly* 53.4 (2009): p. 1028

[112] Aldrich, Howard. *Organizations and environments*. Stanford University Press, 2008. p. 4

[113] Seybolt, Taylor B. "Harmonizing the humanitarian aid network: Adaptive change in a complex system." *International Studies Quarterly* 53.4 (2009): 1027-1050.

This system operates as a "complex open system" or a system that consists "of specialized actors that are loosely coupled, socially connected, and highly dependent on external resources."[114] The specialized actors in focus are coupled but loosely so, their connections made up of funding contracts and interpersonal relations between staff and they do not regularly produce their own sources of capital. Resources in the form of capital comes from private companies, individual donors (philanthropists and businesses practicing philanthropic ethics), and foreign governments. This outside funding stream affects the ways and means that organizations pursue their work and thus affects every member of the network from UN Agencies down to the local NGO.

To better understand how the network is constructed, it can be helpful to look at the case of CDO. This local Kurdish organization started 2001 in KRI with the initial purpose of providing legal aid to denizens of the region. However, with the rekindling of sectarian fighting in 2006, the mass internal movement that happened as a result, and the intensive international intervention from the UN and international aid organizations, they began to provide additional support to the community and its newcomers. In this time period they were primarily working with UNHCR and UNICEF. Then, during the 2013 wave of displacement triggered by ISIL, they continued and expanded their provision of direct aid and other services. During this wave, they worked with UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO and "almost all aid agencies and some international NGOs".[115] CDO slowly transitioned from a small legal aid agency and into a major player with a staff and working area covering virtually all of Kurdistan and the northern governorates of Iraq.

Another organization, REACH Iraq (who elected to not be interviewed for this paper and who is unaffiliated with the later mentioned REACH Switzerland), followed a slightly different path to joining the humanitarian aid network targeting IDPs in KRI and Iraq. From the "About Us" section on their website they present their entrance into the field as one initiated by the 1995 exit of a major international aid agency, Oxfam GB. When Oxfam GB left Iraq some of the national staff chose to start their own organization which would perform similar work in the communities that were no longer being served by Oxfam. In this way the

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[114] Seybolt, Taylor B. "Harmonizing the humanitarian aid network: Adaptive change in a complex system." *International Studies Quarterly* 53.4 (2009): 1027-1050.
[115] Appendix 2, CDO, 02:22

organization can be seen to have prior experience even though the organization was newly established. [116]

These two organizations serve as "implementing partners" for UN agencies and international NGO programs. As international groups enter a region they often bring foreign staff with them to manage the overall mission and hire nationals as implementation staff. They also sign contracts with local organizations who serve as implementing partners to perform additional work. For example the World Food Programme (WFP) may gain permission from the government to bring food into the country from outside sources. Once the food has arrived the responsibility of verifying a beneficiaries eligibility to receive the food and tracking it's actual disbursement at the point of CDO/beneficiary exchange would fall on CDO. The records of this program would then work their way back up, CDO providing documentation and evaluation, WFP verifying its accuracy and documenting the output of the organization. In this way the information and management flows of actor interactions can be seen as very top-down oriented, where international actors carry the authority and disburse funds that local organizations compete for and demonstrate effectiveness with.

Of course this is not entirely a one way street. Local and international actors alike often mention interorganizational communication as key to developing, tracking, and reviewing projects with the hope of becoming more effective. Maintaining communication so that distinct actors can jointly offer a service is a key part of systemic networks . Defined by Alter and Hage as, "'clusters of organizations that make decisions jointly and integrate their efforts to produce a product or service'' it is clearly evident that the network in which CDO, IOM, and their peer actors are working fit the profile of a systemic network.[117] They work together to gather and share information on target populations and develop programs which they run collaboratively with varying degrees of horizontal or vertical management structures.

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[116] REACH Iraq. "History." (n.d.) https://reach-iraq.org/history/
[117] Alter, Catherine, and Jerald Hage. *Organizations working together*. Vol. 191. Sage Publications, Inc, 1993. p. 1-2

6.2 The Aspects of the Network

To reinforce the identification of a systemic network within the IDP humanitarian network of Sulaymaniyah it is also important to understand how Alter and Hage's four parts of a systemic network are manifested within the network of focus. These four parts are the system's environment, structure, processes, and outcomes.[118]

6.2.1 Environment

The system's environment is defined by the tasks that each organization must complete and the severity of their interdependence in achieving these tasks.[119] Delving deeper, there are four factors that affect each task, these being the task's complexity, uncertainty, duration, and volume. Within the context of focus, the general task can be seen to be helping displaced Iraqi's who have moved to Sulaymaniyah achieve durable solutions to their displacement.[120] This is an immensely complex task. Multiple waves of displacement, decades of government instigated sectarian divides, and the ongoing influence of outside actors in the country are just a few of the complicating factors. Adding to this, the target population is also highly diverse with histories that differ wildly. IDPs beneficiaries could be wealthy families forced out of their homes and across the country, families who have spent the past 30 years in displacement (identified by the IOM interviewee as a distinct category known as 'movers'), or individuals who were displaced and then attempted to return only to be displaced again.[121] [122] In many cases, an individual may not even self-identify as an IDP. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the issue.

There is also a high degree of situational uncertainty which organizations attempt to mitigate but which at the same time is fundamental to the structure of the network. International agencies operate at the good-will of the Iraqi government which can bar their entry or make it difficult for them to operate within the country. Indeed, a recent blog post

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[118] Alter. *Organizations working together*. (1993).

[119] Seybolt. "Harmonizing the humanitarian aid network: Adaptive change in a complex system." (2009)

[120] "In 2020, transitioning IDPs towards durable solutions remains at the top of the United Nations' priorities in Iraq. But the ability for humanitarian actors to effectively operate is increasingly constricted, as political unrest, government gridlock, and the impact of COVID-19 makes the work of humanitarians more difficult than ever. Accessing people in need has become more challenging than at any other time since combat operations against ISIL." from OCHA. "About OCHA Iraq." (n.d.) https://www.unocha.org/iraq/about-ocha-iraq

[121] REACH. "RASP Informal Site Assessment Sulaymaniyah Governorate" (2018 August) https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/66392.pdf

[122] ACAPS. "Iraq Displacement PRofile." (2014, July 4) https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iraq_displacement_profile_4_july_2014.pdf

from a UN agency called the Iraqi government to attention for being slow to renew entrance permits for a number of agencies in early 2020.[123] Local organizations receive grants to run programs but these grants are often short term and may not develop into a system that beneficiaries can rely upon. Local organizations such as REACH Iraq have noted this in publications and research papers stating, "[...]most available livelihood projects targeting displaced women as one-size-fits-all and short-term (usually 1-3 or 6-month) programmes. [...] donors often do not fund programmes that are longer than a few months."[124] This is disjuncture between beneficiary needs and program duration can be further highlighted from data IOM has gathered from IDP interviews. In multiple reports where IDPs are interviewed about their future intentions many say that they expect to stay in their current locations for at least one year.[125]

The duration of the problem is another complicated factor. There is certainly no temporal limit to an individual or familys displacement. As mentioned earlier, some cases have been experiencing displacement for decades. The lack of institutional and societal stability is also an influencing factor. What seems to be a stable situation today can quickly spiral out of control due to unforeseen complications such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the government of Iraq providing insufficient support to schools serving displaced children.[126] [127]

The volume of the beneficiary group is one relative bright spot in the problem's environment. While displacement ultimately affected five million Iraqis there have been two notable turning points since 2013: when returns rates surpassed displacement rates, and when the number of displaced reached a relative plateau of less than half of those who had experienced displacement.

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[123] UN News. "Aid to vulnerable Iraqis may 'come to a complete halt within weeks'." (2020, January 16) https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1055462

[124] Buijsse. "Multi-Actor Response to the Internal Displacement of Iraqi Nationals: A Field Study on Coordination of the Humanitarian Emergency Response in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq." (2015)

[125] Kaya. "Displacement and women's economic empowerment: voices of displaced women in the Kurdistan region of Iraq." (2018). P. 15

[126] ACTED. "Key messages on current limitation of movement due to the Corona Virus (COVID-19) for IDP's and staff in formal IDP camps in Iraqbased on Ministry of Health and Environment instructions" (2020, April 8) https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20200326_key_messages_covid-19_health_wash_cccm_clusters_final_v2.pdf

[127] Fox, Tessa. "Rights group: Iraq education system on brink of collapse." (2019, November 2) Al Jazeera https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/rights-group-iraq-education-system-brink-collapse-191028180740513.html

6.2.2 Structure

The second part of the systemic network is its structure, of which there are six variables: size, complexity, connectivity, centrality, differentiation, and stability. In general, larger networks, particularly those in the humanitarian assistance field, have complex structures, which can make them cumbersome and have negatively affected aid delivery and effectiveness in other crises.[128] In Sulaymaniyah, according to the NCCI, a member led organization founded in 2003 and dedicated to humanitarian coordination in Iraq, there are roughly 26 international agencies and 16 local NGOs alone working within the Sulaymaniyah governorate.[129] There are also multi-stakeholder coordination groups which bring together organizations from across Iraq to discuss solutions, methods, emergency issues, and general coordination. The two primary examples of this type of group coordination are the UN's cluster system and the Returns Working Group (RWG) which is headed by IOM. The cluster system provides targeted, specialized assistance and outputs according to the focus of the cluster. There are 11 clusters covering topics such as camp coordination and camp management, food security, and logistics. These clusters interact with each other to provide the necessary service.[130] The RWG is another inter-organizational group but one that is dedicated specifically to helping IDPs achieve durable solutions to their displacement. They note eight activities which can generally be summarized as promoting cohesion and effective aid delivery amongst organizations interacting with IDPs. Activities range from keeping a database about projects targeting IDPs, developing best practices for assisting IDPs, and advocating on behalf of IDPs.[131]

The complexity of the structure relates to the "number of services or products offered".[132] The overarching goal of helping IDPs achieve a durable solution to their displacement seems, from the outside, relatively straightforward but the number of services that must be offered to achieve it is high and their variety wide ranging. In interviews with interlocutors they listed the following as just a few of their services: recovery projects (e.g. restoration of basic services, electricity, water, health facilities, schools, livelihoods);

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[128] Seybolt. "Harmonizing the humanitarian aid network: Adaptive change in a complex system." (2009)
[129] NCCI. "Iraq Geographic Sectors Map" (n.d.)
https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiZWZmN2VhNzQtYmY3Zi00NmFmLThiMjItMTg4ZTc1ZmRjNGRm
IiwidCI6IjI3ODA2YTFmLWU0YWQtNGM5NC1hZDU3LTIxOGZjNWFjNTk1ZCIsImMiOjEwfQ%3D%3D
[130] OCHA. "What is the Cluster Approach?" (n.d.)
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach
[131] Iraq Recovery. "Returns Working Group (RWG)" (n.d.) http://iraqrecovery.org/RWG
[132] Seybolt. "Harmonizing the humanitarian aid network: Adaptive change in a complex system." (2009)

facilitating returns and identifying people in camps who wish to return; project monitoring assessments; housing reconstruction; managing information call centers and community centers for IDPs and local resident; gathering data around IDPs and returnees.[133]

The network aims to improve connectivity and centrality when possible. OCHA serves as the network communication hub, facilitating regional meetings, cluster coordination, and facilitating communication across the diverse array of humanitarian actors involved.[134] By providing one theoretical hub for information and programming there should be a high level of centrality and connectivity. However, it appears that this is not always the case. Interlocutors have noted that international staff often live separate from the areas in which they work, can be difficult to reach, and do not heed the advice of local organizations. [135] This calls into question the highly connective and central picture that OCHA and international humanitarian responders paint when describing their methods of connection. Centrality does, however, appear to be relatively high. Most local actions seem to be performed by local organizations who receive program outlines and funding from international agencies who are generally within OCHA's communication network.

The final two parts of the network's structure are its differentiation (the number of specialized services offered by each unique actor) and stability (the rate of actor turnover and client turnover).[136] In cluster organization individual UN agencies are in charge of specific cluster focuses and local organizations diversify their services to run the programs they receive funding for. This would mean that the leading UN agencies have low differentiation and the local organizations have a higher differentiation. Interviews paint a different picture where IOM is involved in a larger and more diverse number of activities than CDO.[137] The stability of the network is more difficult to assess with the data available. From documents and interviews it seems that the primary actors in question (i.e. UN agencies, CDO) have been involved in the crisis and assisting displaced individuals since before the current crisis'

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[133] Appendix 5, IOM, 00:30 and CDO. "2017 Annual Report" (n.d.)

[134] OCHA. "Out Work." (n.d.) from https://www.unocha.org/about-ocha/our-work

[135] Appendix 2, CDO, 52:30

[136] Seybolt. "Harmonizing the humanitarian aid network: Adaptive change in a complex system." (2009)

[137] CDO described their work as primarily consisting of protection and legal assistance as well as health assistance and food distribution. (Appendix 2, 3:12) where as IOM described activities that included infrastructure improvement, housing reconstruction, direct service provision, cluster coordination, data gathering and research, social work, and identifying and helping IDPs who wish to return to their places of origin (Appendix 5, IOM, 03:12). IOM identified not only a numerically larger number of activities but the tasks involved in the activities described are also highly different and require different work (e.g. construction, social work, communication, research).

inception.[138] The number of clients has surely risen and fallen but since the peak in 2017, returns have steadily increased which should theoretically lead to more comprehensive coverage of those still displaced. However, as the number of displaced decreased, and the severity of the crisis appeared to dissipate, so too did international funding levels which made service provision more difficult and thus decreased the overall stability of the network.

6.2.3 Process

The processes of the network plays a crucial role in determining the malleability of the network and thus also its outputs. Seybolt identifies more malleable networks as having a better ability to adapt to changing circumstances by incorporating process reviews and improvements.[139] Networks that continuously monitor and evaluate their programs from the outset of their intervention are better able to fix problems that arise than the ones that only evaluate at the end of a program. This will, in turn, necessarily also affect the output quality, that is, the ability of the network to address the full range of issues faced by its beneficiary population. A low quality network output would consist of a single or only a few needs being met while a high quality network output would provide outputs that meet all the needs of the target population.[140] As an example, when intervening in a displacement crisis a network that is only able to provide direct nutrition aid can be said to have a lower quality output than a network that is able to provide food, shelter, cash assistance, and conflict mediation.

Within the network at question there are different levels where processes take place and the interaction between these levels is important to understand. Seybolt identifies two network levels: the administrative level which takes place at organization headquarters interaction and an operational level which takes place on the ground or in the field.[141] The administrative level consists of the headquarters of the actors involved. Administrative interaction takes place, for example, in cluster and RWG meetings where the GoI, UN agencies, and local organizations discuss their responses, make plans, and formulate agreements. A contractual agreement between UNHCR and CDO can be said to take place at the administrative level.

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[138] CDO has been involved in IDP assistance since 2006 (Appendix 2, CDO, 02:22) and IOM has been involved with IDP assistance in Iraq since 2003 (Appendix 5, IOM, 02:30)
[139] Seybolt. "Harmonizing the humanitarian aid network: Adaptive change in a complex system." (2009)
[140] *Ibid.*
[141] *Ibid.*

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Then there are the operational or field level processes which can be seen to take three different forms: sequential, reciprocal, or collective. Sequential aid delivery would be a process similar to the assembly lines of a car manufacturer where aid arrives in a consecutive series of disbursement (e.g. first food delivery, then shelter delivery, and then identification document delivery). Reciprocal processes are those where multiple actors provide the same service and thus overlap. Collective processes denote coordinate processes where separate actors address separate issues to provide a comprehensive (and thus higher quality) outcome. [142] The collective process can be said to be employed to some extent in Sulaymaniyah as both organizations interviewed described interactions that fit the profile of collective processes rather than sequential or reciprocal.[143] [144] Indeed, a cursory glance at NCCI's service delivery dashboard (see *fig. 1*) shows that the 42 organizations operating within the governorate address the full range of issues identified by crisis responders without overly favoring one sector. The caveat to this observation is that the true output, that is the direct effect on beneficiaries' lives, can be more difficult to discern. Outcomes are filtered first thought M&E officers for local organizations which then become collected and further summarized in agency reports which often highlight successes and number of individuals reached rather than the percentage of those in need vs. those served.

Overall, network processes Sulaymaniyah seem to be characterized by moderate flexibility and collective action which produces a better outcome than if the network did not have mechanisms promoting this. The flexibility of the response is constrained by exogenous factors such as donor dynamics, limitations from GoI, and basic economics such as a lack of sufficient funding by the international community. One vignette from CDOs experience illustrates this dynamic well. UNHCR asked CDO to conduct a survey but the survey included questions that were viewed as insensitive or not methodologically sound by the local organization. When CDO suggested they change the survey they were told they could not

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[142] Seybolt. "Harmonizing the humanitarian aid network: Adaptive change in a complex system." (2009)

[143] "[...]we would be interested in having a local institution or civil society involved for sure, right, and we do frequently take feedback and make changes to our programming based on what we hear from local populations or local authorities or civil society organizations etcetera." (Appendix 5, IOM, 26:25)

[144] "we were working with UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, almost all aid agencies and some international NGOs [...] Mainly we are well known by protection and legal assistance but beside that we rarely, barely because that, honestly speaking the international aid agencies and NGOs asked CDO to be a part of the process where we were also involved in food distribution was WFP" (Appendix 2, CDO, 03:00) and "As coordination the clusters still exist. At least the main clusters. The protection of the GBV. The food cluster the livelihood subcluster. All of these still exist. We have the monthly meeting among the international and national ngos." (Appendix 2, CDO, 46:48)

because it would take too much time. The interviewee did not say what the ultimate outcome of the survey was or how it actually affected aid service delivery but the fact that this is an issue that was remembered demonstrates that there is not an insignificant level of inflexibility in the network. The processes of the network will be further detailed as the analysis approaches how the actors frame their involvement in the network.
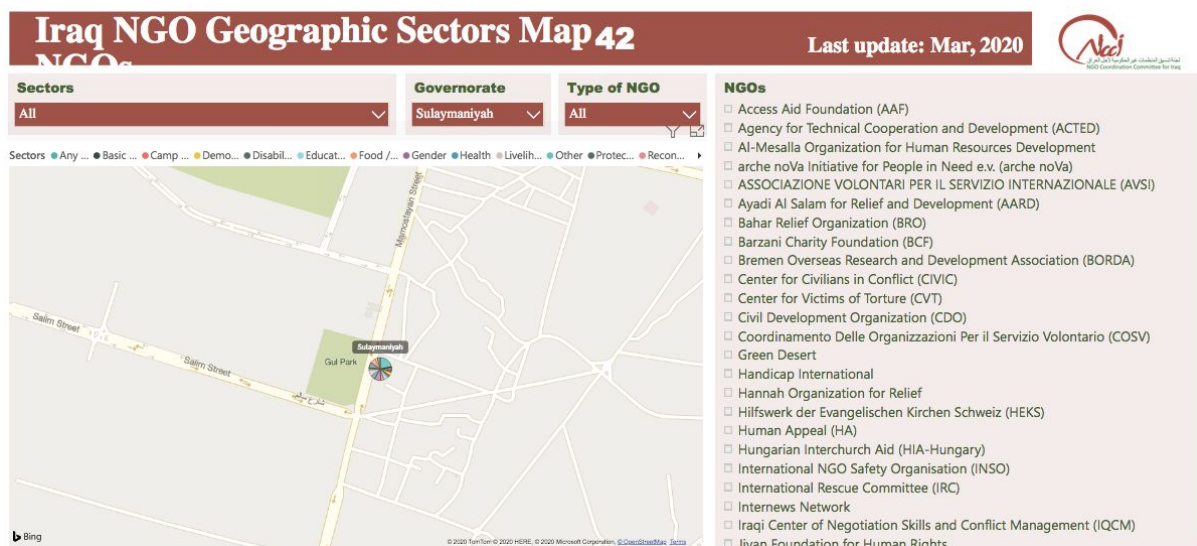

Fig. 1 - Image of NCCI's dashboard showing organizations and their sector work[145]

6.2.4 Exogenous

The open nature of the system in question also allows exogenous factors, that is factors which are outside the formal construction of the network, to play an important role in how the system is constructed, how it operates, and the outcomes it produces (both the intended and unintended). It would be impossible for the actors within the network to develop a closed system as the very nature of their work and the actors themselves connote outside influence.

Despite the agencies' efforts to be apolitical they are operating within a system where governments can pull funding for perceived slights[146] or include mandates to focus on specific issues.[147] Their activities in the country are curtailed by government permission which can wax and wane with popular opinion, personalities of government officials, and emergent situations such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. All these factors emphasize

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[145] *NCCI. "Iraq Geographic Sectors Map" (n.d.)*
[146] "Coronavirus: Trump's WHO de-funding 'as dangerous as it sounds'." *BBC*. 2020 April 15 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52291654
[147] Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation. "Nordic influences on Gender Policies and Practices at the World Bank and the African Development Bank: A Case study" (2012)

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the need for malleable processes with continuous and detailed reviews or else the unintended consequences may begin to outweigh the intended consequences of the intervention.

The context specific approaches and the necessity of the network's contextual awareness was highlighted by IOM during the interview. "It is highly contextualized within Iraq, even within individual communities in Iraq so I think you know we would tailor our assistance as much as possible to people's needs and to build on their own sort of coping mechanisms, their own resources, or whatever so were not displacing local mechanism and what people are able to accomplish themselves."[148] To understand what can be considered an effective outcome in each context, down to the community level, it is crucial that international organizations employ local staff (this is in fact happening at IOM where over 90% of their staff are Iraqi nationals). Doing so allows for at least some level of unintended outcome mitigation that may come from uninformed foreign-originated actions.

In sum, the humanitarian network targeting IDPs in Sulaymaniyah can be said to be operating in an open network and that it is thus affected by exogenous factors. It is a large system with a highly complex and relatively connected network consisting of at least 42 actors. These actors communicate through a fairly central method of communication, that is organized by OCHA and are effectively differentiated in terms of the services they provide. The system and beneficiaries, at least in the past year, have become fairly stable. This structure is in constant risk of disruption though as evidenced by the effects of COVID-19. Now that the pandemic is in full swing, services have been stopped, and stay-in-place orders issued, the system is facing monumental disruption and what can be said to have existed at the end of 2019 is changing and will in all likelihood remain different for the future.

6.3 Operating Within the Network

Within the network, IOM, CDO, and the multitude of other organizations operating within Sulaymaniyah frame their work as both cooperative and independent; it can be difficult for both researchers and beneficiaries alike, to fully understand the true interconnectedness of these actors. One interviewee even touched on this dynamic, noting that as part of a monitoring and evaluation portion of a project they had difficulty making it clear to

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[148] Appendix 5, IOM, 36:22

beneficiaries that they would not be providing any aid and that they could not directly provide solutions to problems in the program.[149]

6.3.1 IOM as part of the Network

IOM, which self-situates as the "lead intergovernmental organization" also seems to position itself as (one of) the lead organizations operating within Sulaymaniyah running programs for IDPs and developing knowledge on the topic of IDP assistance and experience.[150] Their efforts generally revolve around three expansive forms of action: direct service provision, advocacy, and communication facilitation. The IOM representative interviewed listed their activities as those that, "[surround] durable solutions for IDPs, including recovery projects, so restoration of basic services, electricity, water, health facilities, schools, livelihoods. Facilitating returns, so identifying people in camps who wish to return and working with them to overcome obstacles to return. Housing reconstruction, so data around IDPs and returnees. And then we also coordinate the Returns Working Group which is an interagency working group to coordinate activities around durable solutions. In Sule [interviewees abbreviation] as elsewhere we, yeah basically, work in those work areas as well as issues related to social cohesion, reconciliation, health, and MHPSS [mental health and psychosocial support]." This extensive list of activities demonstrates that IOM is a highly diversified actor within the context of Sulaymaniyah that performs three umbrella actions with many supporting actions falling under each main action.

Furthermore, IOM often frames their work as that of a coalition or at least actions that are done in conjunction with other organizations. The Returns Working Group (RWG) can be seen as one of two flagship initiatives in this vein. This is a collection of roughly 113 organizations, headed by IOM and notably including GOI actor MOMD, that discuss current practices and events with the aim of improving the rate, reliability, and sustainability of returns.[151] The second initiative is a five year longitudinal study conducted in conjunction with Georgetown University which follows displaced families experiences in displacement. This initiative produces yearly reports that summarize and analyze IDP experiences as well as off-shoot reports that look more closely at particular aspects such as: location of origin,

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[149] Appendix 2, CDO, 38:30
[150] IOM. "About IOM." (n.d.) https://www.iom.int/about-iom
[151] Iraq Recovery. "Returns Working Group (RWG)" (n.d.)

location of destination, reasons for remaining, and ability to apply for compensation.[152] These two initiatives are clear examples of IOM working within the general network of Iraq to develop and promote knowledge around displacement in Iraq.

However, within Sulaymaniyah their work as part of the IDP assistance network, particularly with regards to direct assistance, is less clear. Through internet research it was difficult to find evidence of ongoing partnerships or the potential for new ones (i.e. call for proposals or tenders). When asked about partnerships with IOM, CDO said that IOM does not contract local organizations as partners and instead provides direct services through their own staff. "IOM as a partner no you know that they are working directly but there were cooperation with IOM [...] but as partner no because they have, they don't have any implementing partner they are working directly by themselves".[153] This is at odds with IOM's interview representation where there were repeated references to working closely with a community to develop and implement programs such as, "when we begin an activity in a particular community this process of engaging the community or venturing participation in the design and implementation of the project as well. There we would have an opportunity to engage closely with the local community."[154]

6.3.2 CDO as Part of the Network

CDO is an organization that operates at the capacity of the context. That is to say, at the height of the crisis they were involved in a far higher number of projects and had a larger number of staff than they do now when the crisis has abated to some extent. In CDO's 2017 annual report they detail seven projects run through partnerships with five UN agencies (UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP). These projects primarily focus on information gathering, referring individuals to the appropriate organization for direct services (e.g. referring a family to WFP for food aid), and managing community centers where local and IDP populations alike can visit to learn, relax, and exist in a neutral space. [155]

Through interviews, it was clear that CDO views itself as having expert knowledge about the circumstances that the target groups find themselves facing and best practices that

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[152] Georgetown University, "IOM-GU Iraq IDP Study." (n.d.)
https://ccas.georgetown.edu/resources/iom-gu-iraq-idp-study/
[153] Appendix 2, CDO, 8:30
[154] Appendix 5, IOM, 27:57
[155] CDO. "2017 Annual Report" (n.d.)

should be implemented to improve program management. However it seems that, at least from CDOs perspective, their knowledge is not always well received. In multiple instances CDO was invited to weigh in, and provide feedback about programs and dynamics in Sulaymaniyah only to realize that their knowledge could not or would not be transformed into action.

CDO detailed a clear example of this dynamic in a cash grant program facilitated by UNHCR with CDO serving as a monitor. CDO identified multiple issues within the program that they brought to UNHCR's attention, these being a survey question that was insensitive to the community climate (i.e. asking if respondents were Shia or Sunni), the amount dispersed to individuals, and the method of dispersal (in three batches over an extended time period). CDO suggested that the question should be changed but UNHCR responded that it could not be changed because it would take too long. They suggested that the amount should be reduced so that more families could benefit, elaborating that there were instances where families of similar characteristics and in the same building were unable to benefit equally from the program (i.e. one family receives the cash grant and the other did not). UNHCR said that this could not be changed as the amount was set by the donor. Finally, the amount was split into three sums and given at regular intervals. CDO said that this was insensitive to the beneficiaries as they perceived that the organization disbursing the funds did not trust them to safely handle the money, and twice reminded families who had been unable to receive the assistance that they were not receiving assistance. UNHCR came back again saying that this had been decided by the donor and could not change. With all three comments from CDO, UNHCR projectected itself as unable to change the program in the way a local organization suggested, demonstrating that the collaborative rhetoric used may not clearly represent the dynamic as it is on the ground.

Adding to this, from the interview with CDO it is evident that there is at least a modicum of negative competition, or at the very least ineffective collaboration, among local organizations, and between local and international organizations. During the interview, CDO's Director noted two scenarios that play out. In the first scenario local NGOs send complaints to international agencies operating in the governorate asking for an explanation as to why CDO receives a program grant when CDO is already a part of a number of grant projects. CDO learns about these complaints and then has the perception that there is a lack of trust or good will between their peer organizations saying, "for example the other national

NGOs hating you or somehow speaking about you from behind which is not professional."[156] In the second scenario, CDO and other local organizations have been told that the international community will soon (point of reference is late 2019) transition programs away from focusing on emergency support and redirect them towards development support. As part of this transition, local organizations perceive that international organizations are redirecting funding away from local ones that they have built relationships with, essentially creating small fractures of trust within the network as it has been established.[157] CDO points out that this is not inline with the UN strategic plan for 2020 as currently local NGOs receive roughly 15% of funds instead of the 20% goal.[158]

From these two vignettes it is clear that this network, as in other humanitarian networks, "combines some of the worst aspects of bureaucratic hierarchy (for example, UN agencies) with market-driven conflict (for example, NGOs refusing to cooperate as they compete for funds from the same donor governments)."[159] In the first instance, the established humanitarian knowledge hierarchy is evidently still firmly entrenched in Sulaymaniyah. UN agencies such as IOM, international aid research organizations such as REACH Switzerland, and state governments are seen as the holders of more valuable information worthy of inclusion in knowledge sharing platforms such as RWG and program development, whereas local organizations such as CDO are invited as essentially spectator participants who have difficulty making themselves heard.

To make this matter slightly more complex, when asked what the 82% of staff who were let go did after their dismissal, CDO mentioned that 30 staff were hired by UNHCR and a number of others were hired by other UN agencies. From this experience it could be considered that these local organizations serve as training places for future UN agency employees. UN agencies fund local organizations to run programs and then slowly reduce

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[156] Appendix 2, CDO, 52:00
[157] "And year by year the funds reduce and the UN agencies say they will shift from emergency to development but still no one knows how the development will start and the national NGOs really, in Sulaymaniyah for example, they have a plan to write a letter next week for UNOCHA especially, about the number of NGOs vs the number of iNGOs working in Sulaymaniyah for example somehow all the UN agencies after all these years of working with national NGOs somehow they [depend????] on national NGOs. The justification is they have already some shared funds some NGos they cannot have shared funds so they give the projects to iNGOs while the strategic plan for example the plan UN Strategic Plan for 2020 was 20 percent national NGOs as a [fundamental??] partner but in iraq as I hear that the number or percentage of national ngos not past 14 or 15 percent in all Iraq. In Sulaymaniya UNHCR has one international and one local partner. UNHCR even closed the office." (Appendix 2, CDO, 41:30)
[158] Appendix 2, CDO, 43:00
[159] Alter. *Organizations working together*. (1993)

funding as a crisis prolongs or abates. As the funding is reduced the local organizations shrink and lay off staff. This staff, already familiar with UN protocols and dynamics are then free to be hired directly by international agencies. In this way local organizations' ability to pursue their missions and evolve are directly curtailed while international organizations are able to continue operations and continue to entrench themselves at the top of the humanitarian network developing knowledge and demonstrating effectiveness by operating programs directly instead of funding a program which is implemented by a local organization.

6.4 Detailing the Network Discourse

Until now, the primary focus of this chapter has been on establishing and detailing the existence of a systemic network in Sulaymaniyah that consists of three groups of actors who have the collective goal of achieving durable solutions for IDPs. This collective goal is just one node of the network. Project outputs (i.e. providing food to a displaced family), research papers, joint press releases and annual reports can be considered other nodes that result from this network. Yet another series of nodes that is important to consider is how these organizations linguistically frame and pursue their interactions and involvement in this network through publications and interviews, and how this framing reveals certain power structures within the network that can help or hinder it. Afterall, complaining about group work and the effect it has on individual productivity and efficacy is a common trope in university, NGO, inter-governmental and a multitude of other scenarios the world over.

6.4.1 Positive and Critical Language

Through discussions with IOM and CDO representatives, and literature reviews of organization reports (e.g. annual reports, project reports, longitudinal studies, etc.) two forms of discourse can be identified that relate to organizational involvement in the network: statements that are network positive and statements that are network critical. Network positive language can generally be identified as that which demonstrates content involvement within the network, does not criticize the network, and attributes success to the existence of the network. Network critical language can be considered to be language that calls attention

to flaws in the network concept, details network failures, and relates general dissatisfaction with the network.

6.4.2 Network Positive Language

Throughout the interview with the IOM representative, there was repeated use of language that demonstrated a non-critical and/or positivist view of the network as it stands. Take the following excerpt is an example:

> "So there are local level or in Sulaymaniyah, governorate level, coordination forums or mechanisms where we have both international and local organizations that are present and attend the meeting. So I think this is one place where the local organizations would have a voice in terms of identifying needs in certain places and also just planning interventions that will support communities that they know better than international agencies [...] It's also the UN and international donors that assembled in 2015 made a commitment to ensuring higher percentages of funding would go to local NGOs or local organizations so there would be greater interaction and cooperation between international agencies and local organizations. So we try in our day to day work to do a decent job of engaging local organizations but then from a policy perspective this is also something that we seek to do everywhere, I guess. In a more systematic way and as a matter of policy"[160]

This excerpt can be considered a concise summary of the network positive language that is used to reinforce IOM's (and the UN in general) network positive situation. IOM clearly articulates that they are actively providing multiple avenues for local organizations to become involved in all steps of the assistance process and to engage equally with international organizations. IOM uses terms in the plural to identify spaces for local organization engagement and program development. They single spaces out as "one place" rather than 'the place' which would infer that there are no other avenues available for input. Acknowledgement is made that local organizations "know better" the communities of support rather than international agencies. Acknowledgement is also made of reflections on past failures and the desire to do more even though there is a lack of critical reflection on how that is actually progressing. IOM tries "in our day to day work to do a decent job of engaging local organizations [...] in a more systematic way and as a matter of policy".[161]

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[160] Appendix 5, IOM, 27:57
[161] Appendix 5, IOM, 29:30

These sorts of sentiments are repeated elsewhere in the interview when asked for more information about how programs are planned. Statements such as, " In a village or neighborhood in Iraq we would work closely with mukhtars [...] Or focus group discussions that we would hold with various segments of the community and numerous discussions with the community and we would hold with local authorities town hall meetings in general with members of the community and through these processes I think we can identify needs"[162] again demonstrate a belief that the network is effective at bringing together the relevant stakeholders and situates IOM in a bifurcated role, both among local organizations but also heading them. It is crucial to note that in these sorts of references it is IOM bringing the network together rather than a mukhtar or community inviting IOM to a discussion.

CDO also reflects these pro-network mentalities in multiple forms of formal organizational communication. On the Partners page of their website they state, "since 1999 CDO has been one of the most active NGOs [...] being involved in regional and international networks and working in partnership with international organizations."[163] Through this statement CDO makes it clear to outside observers that they value the network concept, so much so in fact, that they believe it is important to position themselves in the upper echelons of active Iraqi NGOs.

Their 2017 annual report provides two other examples of network positive language. On the top left of 68 pages of the 69 page report, the logos of partner organizations are clearly displayed. This prominent placement of partnership, or at the very least unabashed association, with multiple UN agencies and international organizations again demonstrated the positive value that is seen in being a noted part of the network and CDO's place within that network. CDO also clearly identifies its UN agency partner in each program discussed within the program (see *fig. 2*). This is in stark contrast to REACH Iraq. In the latter's 2018 annual report they also detail the programs they ran but did not mention UN agencies (some of which also fund CDO programs) until the end of their report and at this point they only include the logos. In this way it can be clear that CDO formally attributes a high value to detailing their specific involvement and connections with the network.

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[162] Appendix 5, IOM, 30:00
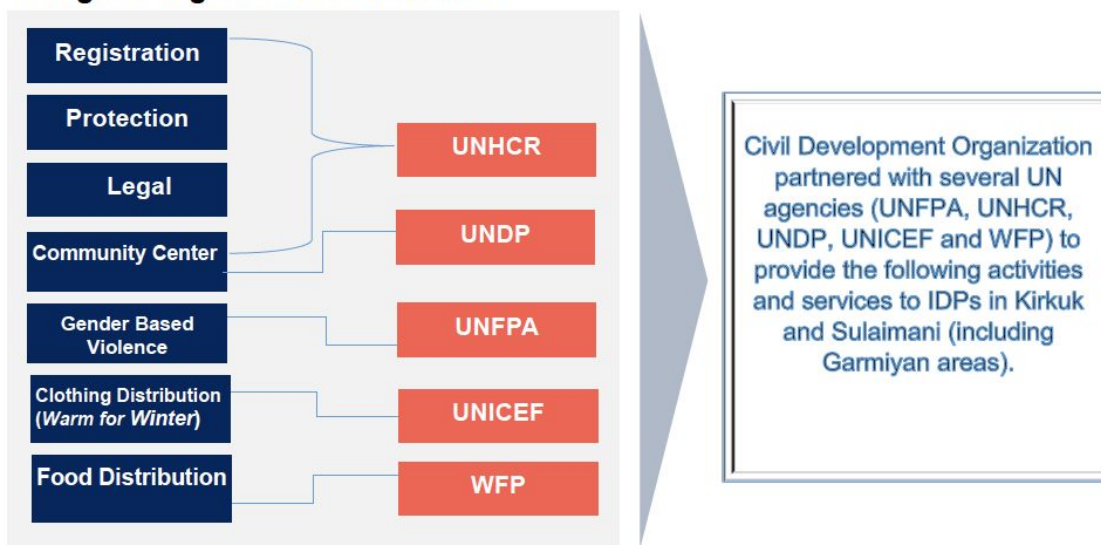[163] CDO. "Partners." (n.d.) https://cdo-iraq.org/partners/

fig. 2 - Image showing CDO programs and partner organizations[164]

As a collective, in forward planning for addressing displacement in Iraq, the UN also produces pro-network statements that strongly support local organization input into addressing the problem at hand. The 2015-2019 United Nations Development Assistance for Iraq states on page 20, "The bulk of UN engagement will be undertaken by multiple agencies [...] This will enable government and the UNCT to develop close and continuing relationships in which national partners execute and implement UN programmes."[165] By noting that national partners will execute plans as a result of their "close and continuing relationships" the UN is inferring that local organizations will be effectively engaged in partnerships with UN agencies.

Language such as that which has been detailed thus far presents the viewpoints of the actors involved in the systemic network in question as working cohesively and effectively towards the targeted solutions. The actors involved produce both novel and reaffirming statements regarding their position and work within the network, do not directly question or

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[164] CDO. "2017 Annual Report" (n.d.)
[165] United Nations. "United Nations Development Assistance Framework Iraq 2015-2019." (2014, April) https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/iraq_undaf-15-mar-2015.pdf

criticize the organization of, and interactions within, the network, and can generally be seen as pro-network. These statements have generally been found in formal, written literature about network interactions and from the interview with IOM, an organization that can be seen as self-positioned at the top of a hierarchy in the system through which monetary, programmatic, and information streams are regulated and codified.

6.4.3 Network Critical Language

These statements are in contrast to more informal communication which was related during interviews about the network's interactions. In these communications there was more language that identified an unequal hierarchy within the network, called attention to unilateral action by network actors, and was generally critical of the network as it stands. This sort of language can concisely be clarified as network critical language.

To start, IOM does acknowledge that there is an inherent problem within the network, that Iraq is a sovereign state. As such, IOM and the international community's presence there is entirely dependent on GoI's benevolence. This is further affirmed by IOM's acknowledgement that GoI does make unilateral, out of network actions. Two comments illustrate this dynamic clearly. "I think the first point is that we would advocate against any sort of forced return. Of course it is the government's prerogative and their right, I guess, to manage displacement situations in their areas according to their own laws."[166] and "So we advocate strongly against forced return for sure and try to find alternative solutions where available but ultimately, it is the government, they are a sovereign state and they sort of have made decisions that we would disagree with".[167] Through these comments it is clear that, even though IOM and UN agencies position themselves as leaders of the network and collective action towards reliable solutions, they are not always able to actually do so.

In terms of collective decision making, IOM also notes that there are other failures within the network related to how programs are developed and managed. "We would be interested in having a local institution or civil society involved for sure [...] we do frequently take feedback and make changes to our programming based on what we hear from local populations or local authorities or civil society organizations [...] in certain instances for certain types of activities we are sort of obliged to follow specific standards that have been

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[166] Appendix 5, IOM, 8:00
[167] Appendix 5, IOM, 13:00

set at either a national level or otherwise."[168] This sort of dynamic is also mentioned in the interview with CDO who notes, "even we have observation that some of the activities of the program we cannot change."[169] This dynamic is detailed in more precise terms later on where CDO was " working with UNHCR. There is a template in doing the monitoring assessment. There was a question: are you shia or sunna. We told them this questions is very sensitive. The people don't want to respond. [...] So we told them this is sensitive. They said no we cannot change it. It takes time, it takes months to know that."[170]

Comments such as these demonstrate that CDO experiences a situation of inequality that they feel compelled to address outside of publicly oriented literature (e.g. annual reports and press releases). CDO further notes this when discussing the inclusion of local knowledge in program development. "If I can say that on papers they exist but in reality no. in the paper if you read the UNHCR paper [...] they bring new models or nice examples but in reality they are not real." This dynamic is also apparently prevalent in private meetings between organizations. International organizations invite local organizations for feedback and insight in planning, but when it seems clear that they lack crucial knowledge they do not defer to the situational expert and instead maintain their top-down approach to program development. "Somehow in national NGOs we faced peoples from UN agencies that accepted us in a high position but really when we came to a meeting with national NGOs we surprised because our information our knowledge was more than they have. So we asked ourselves how can they have inputs in our program while we have more knowledge and information about these issues".[171] Despite these dynamics, public literature and documentation will still paint a positivist picture of interactions.

Ultimately, it seems that even though international actors consistently speak of local inclusion and knowledge, it is often local organizations which are left by the wayside with international actors deciding to take action. CDO notes that both WFP and IOM implement projects on their own.[172]

In this way, it is evident that these two organizations frame and pursue their work in different ways as a result of their inclusion in the network. IOM and international agencies

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[168] Appendix 2, CDO, 26:30
[169] Appendix 2, CDO, 35:31
[170] Appendix 2, CDO, 37:31
[171] Appendix 2, CDO, 53:00
[172] Appendix 2, CDO, 08:30 and 43:30

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position themselves as experts whose situation in the Sulaymaniyah is dependent on Government mentality. They take a positivist approach to the network speaking outwardly and inwardly about the benefits and successes of the network. Their actions are framed as collectivist and inclusive and, when they cannot be entirely inclusive, it is because of things out of their hands (e.g. donor or government restrictions, or established best practices). This is in contrast to how local organizations frame and pursue their work. They operate when and where they can according to their ability to access funds from international organizations. They feel their insight and knowledge is not held at the appropriate level and thus criticize the current operating of the network in non-public settings while simultaneously reinforcing it in official documentation such as annual reports.

6.5 The Network Affecting its Outcomes

Until now the authors have been able to identify the network as it exists in Sulaymaniyah, and understand how the actors within this network view their positioning, actions and agency as a part of the network. UN Agencies and international organizations frame themselves as subject and method experts who effectively work together in equitable partnerships with local organizations to promote and produce durable solutions for IDP beneficiaries. Local organizations, however, have a slightly different take. They also view themselves as working in partnership with international actors but they have a more critical view of this partnership, viewing it as unequal and limiting because of the experiences they have in this network. These two divergent views on the network as it currently exists demonstrates that there is a power imbalance within the network which leads to the involved actors having different outcomes in relation to their shared goal.

At the most basic level, CDO's mission and projects are directly tied to their involvement within the network. CDO made a name for itself in the fields of protection and legal assistance but then, due to inquiries from international organizations (i.e. WFP) they also began to provide direct assistance in the form of food distribution.[173] Now, as funding for projects have begun to dissipate and the objectives of the network have been framed as shifting from emergency assistance to development projects, CDO's projects have shifted

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[173]"Mainly we are well known by protection and legal assistance but beside that we rarely, barely because that, honestly speaking the international aid agencies and NGOs asked CDO to be a part of the process where we were also involved in food distribution was WFP." (Appendix 2, CDO, 03:15)

again. "CDO still continue working with IDPs in camps and out the camps and now because the shortage of funds also some operations reduced we focused on we focused on sexual and gender based violence."[174]

IOM has also had its outputs affected on a fundamental level by the context of Sulaymaniyah and Iraq. In addition to managing and implementing programs they have also focused on improving the knowledge base of the network as it related to IDPs. A 2017 document from IOM about durable solutions for IDPs notes that, "although the need for durable solutions has long featured in the discourse around IDPs and refugees, we know remarkably little about how these solutions are perceived and implemented."[175] This self-acknowledged lack of information has led IOM to focus on producing and improving knowledge on how durable solutions are achieved by and for IDPs.

In fact the research produced from this study appears to have led to the very concept of 'achieving durable solutions for IDPs' having lost importance in favor of the more inclusive concept of helping IDPs themselves achieve durable solutions. The IOM representative noted that, "as far as durable solutions as a concept I think no agency or external actor can provide that. It's really and IDP themselves who are able to develop a durable solution over time. Agencies can provide different types of assistance like in certain sectors related to shelter, housing, related to livelihoods, related to reconciliation or other types of activities."[176]

This recognition that durable solutions can not be created for an IDP and that they must instead be supported in developing their own solutions seeps into the network. As international organizations such as IOM come to the realization that they must be more 'adaptive' and 'innovative' in their responses they will necessarily also expand their services and possibly run a wider variety of projects which in turn could lead to more interactions with organizations such as CDO who would then also become involved in a more diverse range of actions.

Successive failures of communication and responsiveness also affect the outcome of network participants. Take for example the scenario touched on earlier regarding cash transfers from UNHCR to PoC. In this scenario CDO related that they shared with UNHCR

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[174] Appendix 2, CDO, 5:00
[175] IOM. Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq - Part One, April 2017. (2017, April 30)
[176] Appendix 5, IOM, 36:22

concrete suggestions for how to reduce societal tension, expand the program to a wider pool of PoC beneficiaries, and generally improve relations between PoC and humanitarian organizations. UNHCR responded to these suggestions by saying that they could not change the method of distribution because of donor requirements. IOM has also related similar experiences where suggestions from local organizations could not be included due to their desire to comply, "with minimum standards that have been established by the government of the international community."[177] This response caused consternation on the part of CDO because their suggestions were based on direct interactions and shared experiences with PoCs who had been exposed to the existence of the program.

In a similar vein, recall another previously detailed experience where UNHCR provided CDO with a survey intended for PoC beneficiaries. In this situation CDO again provided concrete, culturally relevant suggestions for how to improve the survey so that respondents would be more comfortable when interacting with it. CDO noted that not only was a question contextually problematic but also that its inability to be ignored and still complete the survey made it highly likely that the rate of response would be greatly reduced. UNHCR again responded that the question could not be changed because of donor requirements. CDO expressed frustration not just at this answer but also at the length of time it took to receive one, noting that it took "months".[178]

These sorts of donor constraints do not only affect UNHCR and CDO relations, they hamper other organizations and initiatives as well. REACH Iraq related similar frustrations related to their attempts to develop long term projects (i.e. 6 or more months). "practitioners described most available livelihood projects targeting displaced women as one-size-fits-all and short-term (usually 1-3 or 6-month) programmes. [...] donors often do not fund programmes that are longer than a few months. [...] 'but it's very challenging to do a project [with long-lasting impact] in six months. You need at least one year.'"[179]

6.5.1 Communication Failures

This dynamic goes beyond these three vignettes. CDO related other experiences where they were invited, in conjunction with other local NGOs working in Sulaymaniyah, to

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[177] Appendix 5, IOM, 27:25
[178] Appendix 2, CDO, 37:31
[179] Kaya. "Displacement and women's economic empowerment: voices of displaced women in the Kurdistan region of Iraq." (2018) p. 15

information and feedback sessions about general programming. CDO stated that these meetings were ineffectively planned as they were too short to discuss the topics on the table with all the invited members. There were also cultural dynamics not taken into account (e.g. meetings will regularly start 15 minutes past their expected start time) which further reduced the trust necessary to sustain a network and produce positive results.

These sorts of communication failures also take place between UNHCR and PoCs, without CDO as an intermediary. CDO related an experience where UNHCR was seeking feedback on a program and enlisted community leaders to find respondents. These respondents arrived expecting to receive some sort of benefit in exchange for their responses and, according to CDO, this is because UNHCR did not properly train the individuals it had enlisted to find respondents. The enlisted individuals had brought people who would be unable to properly respond to UNHCRs queries or were promised some sort of good in exchange for participation.

Through these scenarios we can see how in the context of Sulaymaniyah the systemic network is not in the final stage of development as outlined by Alter and Hage. From CDOs perspective there is a failure to reach "broad cooperation involving production of a thing or service" and organizational friction is resulting in the network having characteristics more in line with the second stage, "limited cooperation in accomplishing a functional purpose."[180]

It is evident from CDOs experience that there is tension and a lack of trust within the network. CDO certainly has partnerships with multiple international organizations which are ongoing and have provided services in the past but there are dynamics or relations that prevent the network from reaching its full potential.

It is not international-local dynamics alone that are causing this. Competition for resources can provide similar barriers to reaching the final stage. If CDO feels that they are qualified and able to perform a task but UNHCR is more interested in expanding their grantee pool or diversifying their local partners this can build distrust and amplify negative sentiments in the network. CDO noted that their staff had been reduced by roughly 82% since the height of the crisis and that this was directly tied to the number of programs they were running as implementing partners.[181] Thus, their ability to perform the mission of the

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[180] Alter. *Organizations working together*. (1993) p. 48-49
[181] "Soren: To follow up, you mentioned that your staff reached a high of 360 staff and is now down to 60. Bakhtyar: 64 staff" (Appendix 2, CDO, 44:18)

organization was directly limited by their involvement in the network and the fact that this issue was brought up during the interview demonstrates that the issue is not moot within the organization. CDO clearly sees itself as an organization that is able to pursue work as a result of their involvement in the network but this network also hampers their ability to perform work. However it should also be noted that it is important that international organizations and UN agencies diversify their grant recipients so as to reduce possibilities of corruption (perceived or actual) and build the capacity of the numerous local organizations interested in operating in this sector and region. This dynamic presents a bit of a catch-22 whereby local organizations attempt to improve their effectiveness and specialty while simultaneously being constrained by increased competition and access to limited funds. This competition reduces local organizations' direct service effectiveness and ability to specialize in a specific sector and redirects their efforts towards finding and developing funding streams. CDO's 2017 annual report provides a clear illustration of this dynamic. They are funded by five UN agencies and provide services that range from operating community service centers for local and IDP communities to the registration and digitization of refugees and asylees.

6.5.2 Power Dynamics

Competition and lack of effective coordination between network actors is just one part of the dynamic that reduces the network's positive outcomes. Another crucial part is the entrenched power asymmetry between international and local organizations. This can be seen in part from the way knowledge is developed within the network.

All organizations involved in this network clearly value knowledge and value the use of knowledge to create effective programs. International actors speak of conducting studies over long periods, summarizing data, and consulting with locals as a way to strengthen their knowledge base and be more effective. When interviewing IOM the interviewers referenced an IOM document from 2017 about displaced people in Iraq that explicitly stated this.[182] This desire for more information about durable solutions for IDPs is one explanation for why IOM and UN Agencies are funding research about durable solutions. However, if this is the case, why is more effort not being expended into surveying local organizations working directly

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[182] "Although the need for durable solutions has long featured in the discourse around IDPs and refugees, we know remarkably little about how these solutions are perceived and implemented." from IOM. Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq - Part One, April 2017. (2017, April 30)

with IDPs about their experience in the network? Local organizations after all are primarily staffed by denizens and CDO's director even stated they have no expatriate staff. The major English language reports the researchers found about the experiences of displaced people in Sulaymaniyah were conducted by IOM, Georgetown University, and an organizations called Social Inquiry that was established in KRI but has dual headquarters in Erbil and New York City (and two co-founders who do not appear to have a direct connection to KRI). The authors of this paper found a series of briefs entitled *Rapid Overview of Areas of Return* published by REACH Switzerland. This organization shares its name with a local organization based in Sulaymaniyah but the organization authoring these reports is based in Switzerland and operates globally.

That IOM finds more value in research organizations based abroad is significant. It demonstrates that, despite their network positive language which is ostensibly highly inclusive of local knowledge and experience, they still rely primarily on external information filters and analyzers (even if the data comes from local interviews). This recalls the dynamic elaborated by CDO's director when he said that IOM and UN agencies do not permit enough time for meetings with local organizations, that they may provide incomplete information to local beneficiaries, or when a local organization has a suggestion for how to improve a program to make it more context appropriate but the changes are denied.

This lack of demonstrated faith also seeps in and affects relations within the network. Throughout the interview with IOM they repeatedly referred to local partners. However a search through IOM's global tender list and current tender list revealed few if any partnerships with local service providers outside of infrastructure improvement which is a relatively technical area. In the interview with CDO the correspondent noted that IOM does not work with local organizations and does "direct implementation". That the organization hires local staff is not relevant in this matter. From an organizational interaction, there is a lack of trust going at least one way which directly contradicts the mentality that IOM tries to encourage through its partner oriented statements.

Another level to this unequal dynamic is the mere noting of organizational partnerships. CDO prominently notes the international organizations they work with and the working group meetings that they attend. The Returns Working Group headed by IOM notes that they work with international and local organizations but their NGO/INGO list is predominantly made of international organizations and it is not clear which organizations are

local. It would perhaps be more appropriate for there to be a clearer distinction between local and international organizations.

When local organizations interact with international organizations in this dynamic they are relationally submissive to their international 'partners' who they must maintain good terms with if they hope to exist. Consider CDO's staffing levels for a moment. Their staff number related directly to the funding they received and the funding they received related directly to their ability to gain contracts and maintain good relations.

7. DISCUSSION

To approach the overarching research question *How has the humanitarian network within Sulaymaniyah, Iraq affected programs targeted at achieving durable solutions for IDPs within the governorate?* Three sub questions were developed which, when taken cumulatively, would provide an answer to the umbrella question. The first task was to establish that there is indeed a humanitarian network located in Sulaymaniyah that is focused on achieving durable solutions for IDPs within the governorate.

Operating within Sulaymaniyah there are three actor groups which consist of distinct individual actors: government, international actors, and local actors. The government actors are represented "in person" and by official communications with other network actors. For example this can mean that the government actor is a representative from MoMD or a letter sent to government employees IDPs residing within Sulaymaniyah informing them that they must return to their places of origin if they wish to maintain their employment.

The international actor group consist of UN agencies such as UNHCR and IOM as well as international NGOs such as the Danish Refugee Council, CARE International, and ACTED. These agencies and organizations have foreign headquarters a degree of local presence in Iraq, have long histories of providing services around the world to people experiencing emergency crises, and operate within Iraq only with permission from GoI. As the supreme intergovernmental body coordinating international actions and debate, UN agencies generally situate themselves as lead organizations who help ensure that services are provided to PoC in an effective and efficient manner. In addition to coordination, they also provide funds to the local actor group to implement programs.

The local actor group is made up of domestic NGOs based in Sulaymaniyah. They provide direct services to PoC via partnerships with the international actor group. Their actions are generally led by the interests of the international actors because their actions are based on funding received from international actors.

These three groups communicate and run programs within the governorate which produce benefits for PoC such as employment training, establishing and maintaining community centers, and direct cash transfers. They also author research about people's experiences. These outcomes, in addition to reflection on said outcomes, can be viewed as

nodes within the network of the actor's actions and thus clearly establish that there is a humanitarian network existing within Sulaymaniyah. Through interviews and online desk-research it is evident that all three actor groups are focused on helping IDPs achieve durable solutions. This network is similar to other humanitarian networks which have been identified by various scholars, most relevantly by Ms. Buijsse in her 2015 MSc thesis on the network within Iraq and seconded by Mr. Seybolt in his article on complex humanitarian networks. By identifying this network in Sulaymaniyah the concept of a humanitarian network can be further evidenced.

With the network established, the second sub-question was developed so as to clarify how the involved actors framed and pursued their work. The term 'durable solution' can be considered industry jargon and its meaning can be flexible. Indeed, there are three forms of 'durable solutions' identified in the formative *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* and what works for one IDP family or individual may not work for another.

Through interviews with an IOM representative and a review of literature published by the organization it is clear that IOM acknowledges that there is a lack of knowledge surrounding what it takes to achieve 'durable solutions' for IDPs and the experience of being displaced. To this end, they have taken it upon themselves to partner with other non-Iraqi organizations, US based Georgetown University and the US/KRI based Social Inquiry, to develop knowledge about the IDP experience. This focuses on gathering information directly from PoC and the 'communities they work in'. IOM and other international actors also frame themselves as working in 'partnership' with local organizations to implement projects, taking it so far as to include a specific percentage of expenditures on local organizations in their *2015-2019 United Nations Development Assistance for Iraq.* They do not often frame themselves as working independently, or directly as it is put by local actors, in the interview or literature.

Local organizations frame their actions as the result of partnerships with international actors. They can link specific projects with specific international actors or simply list the international actors they have partnerships with but referencing international actors by name is important as evidenced from the interview with CDO and reviews of organization websites. They frame themselves as having intimate knowledge of the social environment of the network but note that their input, if received, is not always acted on. Their actions are regulated by funding from international actors in that the programs they run are those that the

international actors provide funding for. In an interview, one local actor was vocal about the negative aspects of the network.

The discourse of CDO and IOM's interview illuminated the unequal power balance at play in the network. IOM spoke often of inclusion and community of context input. They note that they take time to develop programs which have been planned with data from the target community. CDO points out that this data may actually be ignored or that it may not be comprehensive enough. They identify specific examples of friction within the network whereas IOM paints a relatively rosey, trouble free dynamic.

Once the perspective of the organizations involved had been addressed the authors turned to the final sub-question aimed at how the network shapes the outcomes of the actors involved. For local actors like CDO, their output is increased but only to a level permitted by international actors. For example, since IOM is implementing projects in Sulaymaniyah directly they do not need a local partner. CDO has reduced its staff and programs as a direct result of international actor withdrawal and vagueness about the transition from humanitarian assistance to development work. However it must also be noted that, were they to operate outside of this network and intentionally not seek out funding from foreign actors they would not have been able to operate as many programs as they did. Indeed, every program mentioned in their 2017 Annual Report was funded by an international actor.

Simultaneously, international actors produce outcomes that may not reach as many PoC or assist PoC to the level they desire because they do not include local actor feedback to the degree appropriate. Recalling CDO's vignette about cash transfers, the inclusion of a specific, culturally inappropriate question was expected to lead to a reduced number of responses and the program disbursing cash to PoC could have reached more people if less money was provided to each PoC. This led to confusion among PoC about perceived inequality amongst themselves.

Through the answering of these three sub-questions the answer to the research question becomes less opaque but not entirely clear. The network clearly affects the degree to which durable solutions are achieved amongst IDPs in Sulaymaniyah but it is not entirely clear how positive or negative it is and there are certainly both positive and negative aspects to it. The unequal power dynamics lead local actors to only operate programs deemed important enough to fund by international actors and generally in the way international actors

want which simultaneously increases the number of programs while also possibly reducing their reach.

Through this understanding, a small step forward is taken towards creating improvements in the humanitarian community in Iraq focusing on creating durable solutions for IDPs. While Ms. Buijsse's paper focused on the immediate actions taking place during a time of heightened emergency this paper focuses more on the aftermath, before the impending switch from humanitarian to development work. The experiences shared by CDO and IOM show where friction exists in the network and by shining a light on the sources of frustration steps towards reducing that friction can be made.

It is crucial to note however that these findings cannot be generalizable. The study was conducted under severe temporal and access limitations. The discourse analysis was conducted with only one representative from the international and local actor groups and the network analysis was not able to account for all organizations operating within Sulaymaniyah. Furthermore, it is important to seek out the voices of IDPs themselves so that the experiences they have as targets of this network can be better understood. As put by IOM, no external actor can provide a durable solution for an IDP. It is up to the IDP themselves to find what is most durable.[183] Without input from IDPs themselves the true effectiveness of the network will be difficult to ascertain and a significant actor left unexamined.

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[183] Appendix 5, IOM, 36:22

8. CONCLUSION

From personal experiences and studies of humanitarian work the authors of this paper theorized that dynamics present in other humanitarian contexts, specifically inefficiencies and inequalities within the humanitarian sector at the point of organization interaction, might also be present in Sulaymaniyah. The authors believed that the relatively recent focus on internally displaced persons could heighten these dynamics and that they in turn could adversely affect the actions of the organizations involved. To this end, the authors decided to seek out interviews with international and local organizations in Sulaymaniyah in the hopes of gaining a better understanding of how this previously acknowledged phenomenon is reflected within the governorate.

In answering the question of *how has the humanitarian network within Sulaymaniyah, Iraq affected programs targeted at achieving durable solutions for IDPs within the governorate* the authors first established that there was indeed a humanitarian network operating within Sulaymaniyah that was focused on achieving durable solutions for IDPs. Interviews with involved organizations were sought so that the formal and informal interactions between organizations could be more clearly understood. Systemic network theory was used in conjunction with a critical discourse analysis of the relevant data to illustrate how the network was constructed, how the organizations viewed their presence within the network and illuminate how these two factors affected the actions and thus outcomes of the organizations.

It is evident that the network and the organization's self representation of their situation within the network affect the programs of the organizations. International and local organizations work together to achieve durable solutions for IDPs in Sulaymaniyah but the tendency of international actors to make unilateral decisions and act independently affects outcomes for the network as a whole. Local organizations are invested in the network but desire more sustained support and a more equal footing with their international network partner which is not always reciprocated. Due to these network dynamics, programs may lack in efficiency and impact because, despite framing by international actors, local actor knowledge is not put into programs as well as it could be resulting, local actors develop programs that cater to their international funders, and international actors' unilateral actions results in network tension which affects network outputs.

9. EXPANDING THE STUDY

The research contained within this paper was conducted during a time when IDP numbers were steady or reducing within Sulaymaniyah specifically and Iraq in general. However it has taken place in the context of recent international focus on how to achieve durable solutions for IDPs the world over. Going forward, the authors believe there is value in pushing this study further, particularly because there is no better time to change a system than when it is being formed.

It would be helpful to strengthen the understanding of the network by securing more interviews with relevant international and local actors. This could be combined with interviews with IDPs themselves who were beneficiaries of network outputs. By expanding the study in this way the results of the network could be more clearly understood and, perhaps most importantly, include the voices of IDPs. The authors believe that there is incredible value in hearing and amplifying the voices of IDPs in this situation. This research demonstrated that their voices may not be carried far enough into the network which develops and implements programs. By interviewing IDPs and including their thoughts within a study there is an increased chance that they will be received and acted upon.

Additionally, an expansion of the field of study to include all of KRI's governorates and more international and local actors would also be valuable. The limited geographic scope of this paper and the two actor interviews provide just a peek into the network. Through the inclusion of more actors and a wider geographic focus the network and the interaction of those actors involved can be more clearly understood and thus it would be easier to pinpoint where changes within the network need to be made to further improve its outcomes.

As a final note, the inclusion of government actors could also be worthy of more attention. As IDPs are still in the domain of their sovereign governments and essentially unable to access international protection mechanisms the network interactions of government actors would provide more insight into how international and local actors deal with them. However governments are complex networks of their own with multiple competing interests (particularly within the complex context of GoI and KRG interactions).

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